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DOUBLE ISSUE

JUNE 1 / JUNE 8, 2020

TIME

GENERATION PANDEMIC

A GLOBAL CRISIS CHANGED THEIR LIVES. HOW THEY RESPOND WILL CHANGE THE WORLD

By CHARLOTTE ALTER

LIFE INTERRUPTED: KIDS AND TEENS IN THEIR OWN WORDS

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TIME
VOL. 195, NOS. 20–21 | 2020

Sisters Camilla (Drexel University, Class of 2020) and Sophia Nappa (NYU, Class of 2022, with guitar), isolating at their father's home in St. Louis on April 30

Photograph by Hannah Beier

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ON THE COVER:
Melissa Nesta, a member of the Drexel University Class of 2020, and Dan Mosley, at home in Philadelphia

Photograph by Hannah Beier for TIME

COVER PHOTOGRAPH IN COLLABORATION WITH MELISSA NESTA

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From the Editor

The next world

MY GRANDFATHER'S LIFE, LIKE THOSE OF SO many of his generation, was shaped by war. He was 11 when World War I broke out in his native Germany and often recounted the lasting effects of that period on his future, beginning with the disruption in his schooling. "Our young and energetic teachers followed the call to the army," he wrote in a detailed account of his life. "Our education naturally suffered, and I went from an excellent student to a borderline one."

Beier, 23, whose work appears on the cover of this issue, at home in Fort Washington, Pa.

I've thought of him frequently these past weeks, watching my own kids—the oldest of them 11 and the youngest named for him—adjust to this strange new reality. The crisis we find ourselves in is of course quite different from the wars he lived through (although I now regret never asking him about the 1918 flu). But I don't know a single parent who isn't worrying about the effect of all this on their children—the fear and loss, the peculiarities and wonders of virtual schooling, the added responsibilities they will face as the world recovers and recalibrates. For millions of kids, the worries are even more immediate; in the U.S. alone, roughly 1 in 5 households with young children now faces uncertainty about where they will find their next meal.

The impact of the pandemic on the next generation's future is the focus of this special issue of TIME. Our intent was to explore the crisis through the lens of the young, so TIME director of photography Katherine Pomerantz and her team did just that—reaching out to about two dozen college photography professors in search of the right photo essay to feature. They found it—including the cover image—in the work of Hannah Beier, a member of the Class of '20 at Drexel University in Philadelphia. For the past five weeks, Hannah has been art directing photographs, via FaceTime, of friends and classmates scattered across the country in quarantine. Her goal, as she puts it, is "to portray personal and authentic moments that connect us beyond the commonality of living through a pandemic."

For the cover story, we turned to TIME national correspondent Charlotte Alter, who has spent much of the past few years reporting on the rumblings and roars of generational change. Her recent book on the subject, *The Ones We've Been Waiting For,* describes how millennials were powerfully shaped first as teens by 9/11 and its aftermath—and later as young adults by the financial crisis. For this issue, she explores how the Class of 2020 is processing the indelible experiences of this pandemic. "We stepped into the world as it was starting to fall apart," Simone Williams, Florida A&M University '20, tells Charlotte. "It's caused my generation to have a vastly different perspective than the people just a few years ahead of us or behind us."

We also asked kids and young adults around the world to share experiences of life at home in their own words. "My dad works in a hospital as a doctor," writes 5-year-old Adrian Garces of Miami. "We can't hug him when he comes home until he takes a shower." Amika George, a student at the University of Cambridge in England, believes young people globally, once dismissed as "Generation Snowflake," will continue to seize on their collective power, "daring to choose hope over fear." Louis Maes, 17, of Bordeaux, France, writes about coming to terms with the instability, uncertainty and unrest: "I think it's about learning how to live within them."

WE ARE ALSO BEGINNING a special three-part series of TIME 100 Talks, our new live virtual event that convenes leaders from around the world to help find a path forward in this unprecedented moment. The new series, made possible through a partnership with P&G, will explore the consequences of the pandemic for marginalized communities and how we rebuild a society that is more resilient and more just.

As Naomi Wadler, a seventh-grader in Washington, D.C., puts it in a moving essay in this issue, "the black and brown people who work as hourly essential workers have found both their jobs and their health at risk." Still, she adds, "that the stories of these people are being told is a small sign of progress ... It gives me hope that each of us can work toward a more equitable future."

You can watch TIME 100 Talks, and find out more, at time.com/time100talks.

I hope you'll join us.

Ed

Edward Felsenthal,
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF & CEO
@EFELSENTHAL

WALTER BEIER

Conversation

TIME
THERE'S A RIGHT WAY TO REOPEN AMERICA. THIS ISN'T IT

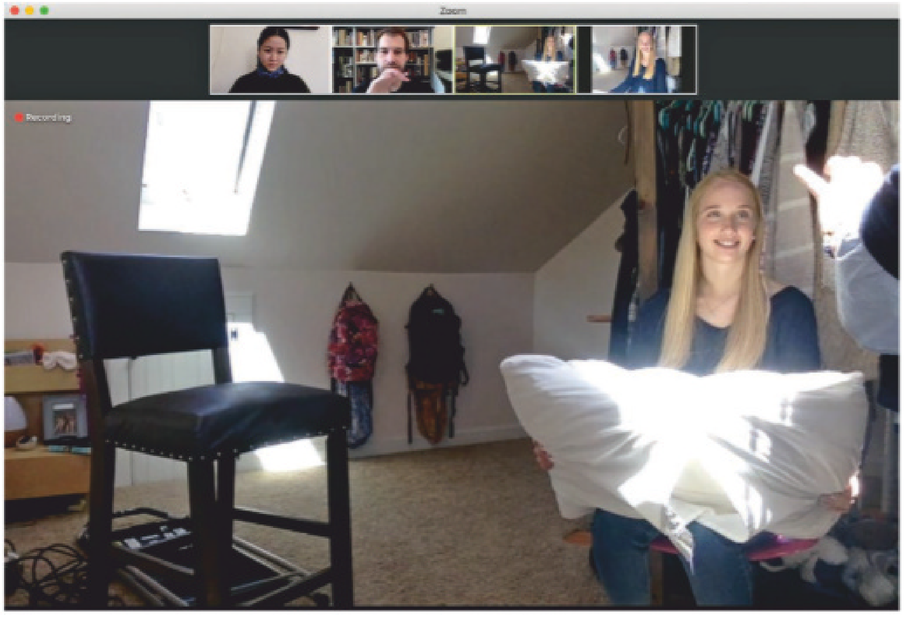
WHAT YOU SAID ABOUT …

THE RISK OF REOPENING AMERICA Haley Sweetland Edwards' May 25 cover story on problems with the federal approach to reopening the U.S. left some readers feeling it was unfair "to lay all our virus problems at [President Donald Trump's] doorstep," as John Horst of Westfield, N.Y., put it. Gary Mangini of Lewis Center, Ohio, argued it's hard to say there's a "right way" for America to reopen when even experts are stumped by COVID-19. Enrique Puertos of Cleveland, Ga., wrote that the situation is a result of so many Americans' living paycheck to paycheck. "This pandemic has shown us," he wrote, "that in the United States, saving the economy is far more important than saving lives or mitigating the risk of spreading this virus." And on Twitter, user Maureen Whitehouse was wistful: "Would be nice to be a United States of America again—emphasis on United."

> ***'Nobody has a crystal ball.'***
>
> **TA-MING HSU,** Houston

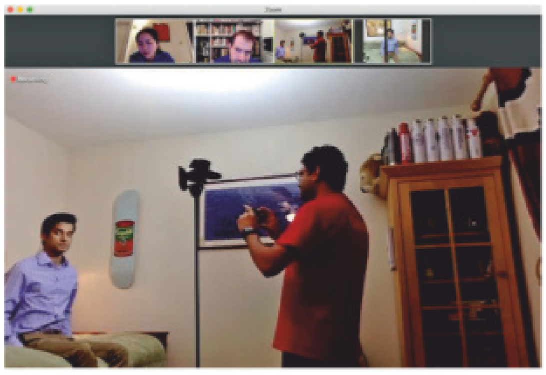
WHY AMERICA MAY EMERGE STRONGER Ian Bremmer's May 18 column got readers thinking about the country's global role during and after the pandemic. Mark B. Leedom of Nashville worried that a U.S.-centric approach could hinder cooperation in the fight against COVID-19. Casey Kirkhart of Santa Cruz, Calif., thought Bremmer should "rethink his premise," focusing not on how the U.S. can emerge stronger but on how America can help the whole world emerge stronger. And Twitter user @CrumpetPete argued that a leadership change would be needed first: "If we have a different president we will do ok."

> ***'Thank you for some light at the end of the tunnel.'***
>
> **PATRICK J. CONROY,** North Fort Myers, Fla.



Behind the scenes

For this week's cover story on Generation Pandemic *(page 42),* TIME photo editor Dilys Ng used Zoom to conduct DIY photo shoots. White pillows and desk lamps stood in for lighting setups, moms did hair and makeup, and photos were taken by smartphone and webcam—under the direction of photographer Pari Dukovic, who was able to see the shots (how else?) via Zoom.



PROGRAMMING NOTE Generation Pandemic is a special double issue that will be on sale for two weeks. The next issue of TIME will be published on June 4 and available on newsstands on June 5.

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT ▸ In "The Honeybee Whisperers" (May 18), we misstated the categorization of the Carniolan honeybee. It is a subspecies of the Western honeybee.

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For the Record

‘WHAT WILL YOUR ESSENTIAL SERVICE BE?’

OPRAH WINFREY,
speaking to 2020 graduates in a virtual commencement address on May 15

‘The question that I have in my heart and in my spirit is, When is this going to end?’

BOBBY RUSH,
Congressman who introduced the Emmett Till Antilynching Act, speaking with NPR on May 15; the Illinois Democrat drew a line from Till’s 1955 murder to the February death of African-American jogger Ahmaud Arbery

50,000

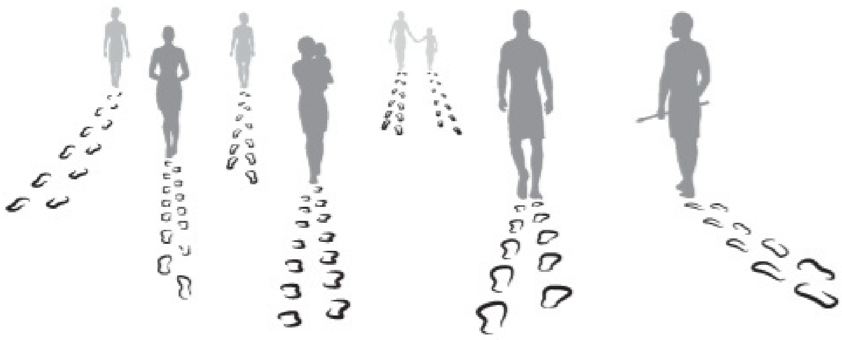
Approximate expected attendance at the 2020 Republican National Convention, set to be held in late August in Charlotte, N.C., according to a May 16 press release; Democrats have been weighing options for a possible virtual convention

‘Our people will have the opportunity once and for all to define our future.’

WANDA VÁZQUEZ,
Puerto Rico governor, announcing on May 16 a nonbinding referendum on whether the territory should become a U.S. state

408

Number of ancient fossilized human footprints found at a site in northern Tanzania—the largest such collection ever discovered in Africa, per a May 14 paper; the footprints are believed to be between 5,760 and 19,100 years old



‘We feel we have so much to share.’

YI-CHUN LO,
deputy director general of Taiwan’s Centers for Disease Control, expressing disappointment over Taiwan’s not having been invited to the World Health Organization’s May 18–19 annual assembly. Taiwan has won praise for its response to COVID-19; the island has seen only seven deaths

GOOD NEWS
of the week

Moose, an 8-year-old Labrador retriever, received an honorary doctorate in veterinary medicine from Virginia Tech on May 15; the dog doctor helps provide therapy at the school’s counseling center

‘I am a good actress.’

NORMA MCCORVEY,
anonymous *Roe v. Wade* plaintiff, attesting shortly before her 2017 death that her late-in-life anti-abortion activism was a paid performance, in an interview for the new documentary *AKA Jane Roe*

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SOURCES: THE NEW YORK TIMES, CNBC, AP, CNN

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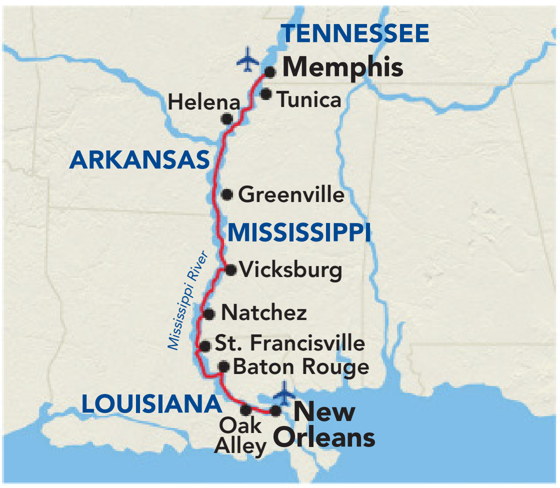
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The Brief

WHO WATCHES President Trump, with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo at the White House on March 20, keeps firing overseers

INSIDE

VERY EARLY VACCINE TRIAL YIELDS PROMISING RESULTS

CONTACT TRACING COLLIDES WITH PRIVACY IN SOUTH KOREA

ROB REINER ON WHAT MADE FRED WILLARD FUNNY

PHOTOGRAPH BY JONATHAN ERNST

POLITICS

Trump’s war on watchdogs

By John Walcott

WHEN PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP FIRED State Department Inspector General Steve Linick on May 15, it wasn’t the first time he had taken aim at a government watchdog in recent weeks. It wasn’t even the second. Since April, Trump has fired or replaced four inspectors general, part of a broader campaign that rolls back post-Watergate government-accountability measures.

In Linick’s case, Trump acted on the recommendation of Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, as Pompeo himself later confirmed. But congressional Democrats are questioning the reasons behind that recommendation: they say Linick’s office was in the middle of investigations that involved Pompeo personally. Inspectors general operate independently inside federal agencies to investigate allegations of political interference, wasteful spending and other abuses of power.

Not long ago, such allegations would have sent a bolt through the political establishment. But what Pompeo may or may not have done has been eclipsed by the rolling purge of officials, an effort that frees the Administration from oversight while most Americans remain focused on COVID-19’s rising toll—and one that could have long-lasting consequences.

‘[Inspectors general] should be free from partisan political interference from either the Executive or the Legislative branch.’

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY

Congressional Democrats are looking into claims that would cast suspicion on the reasons for removal of Linick, who had been the State Department inspector general since 2013. House staffers say Linick was investigating a complaint from State Department officials that Pompeo misused department staff, asking them to perform personal errands for him and his wife, including fetching their dog from the groomer and picking up takeout food.

Congress is also looking into whether the dismissal was linked to the President’s May 2019 decision to clear the way to sell $8.1 billion of U.S. weapons to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates by declaring a state of emergency with Iran, Representative Eliot Engel, chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said May 18. Both Republican and Democratic lawmakers balked at the proposed sale following Trump’s emergency declaration, which came less than a year after U.S. intelligence concluded that the Saudi regime had ordered the murder of Washington *Post* columnist Jamal Khashoggi and amid reports of U.S.-made weapons being used to kill civilians in Yemen.

“I’ve learned there may be another reason for IG Linick’s firing,” Engel tweeted. “His office was investigating—at my request—Trump’s phony declaration of an emergency so he could send weapons to Saudi Arabia.”

Pompeo told reporters on May 20 that claims he had requested Linick’s dismissal in “retaliation for some investigation” were “patently false.” While the allegations remain unproven, shielding Pompeo from oversight “would undermine the foundation of our democratic institutions,” Engel and Senator Robert Menendez, the ranking Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said in a May 16 statement announcing a joint investigation into Linick’s dismissal.

Installing political loyalists in key positions, refusing to let officials testify before congressional committees and leaving top posts vacant or occupied by officials in an acting capacity are all part of a campaign to reduce accountability, says Liz Hempowicz, director of public policy at the Project on Government Oversight. “This is exactly how the inspector-general system is not supposed to work.”

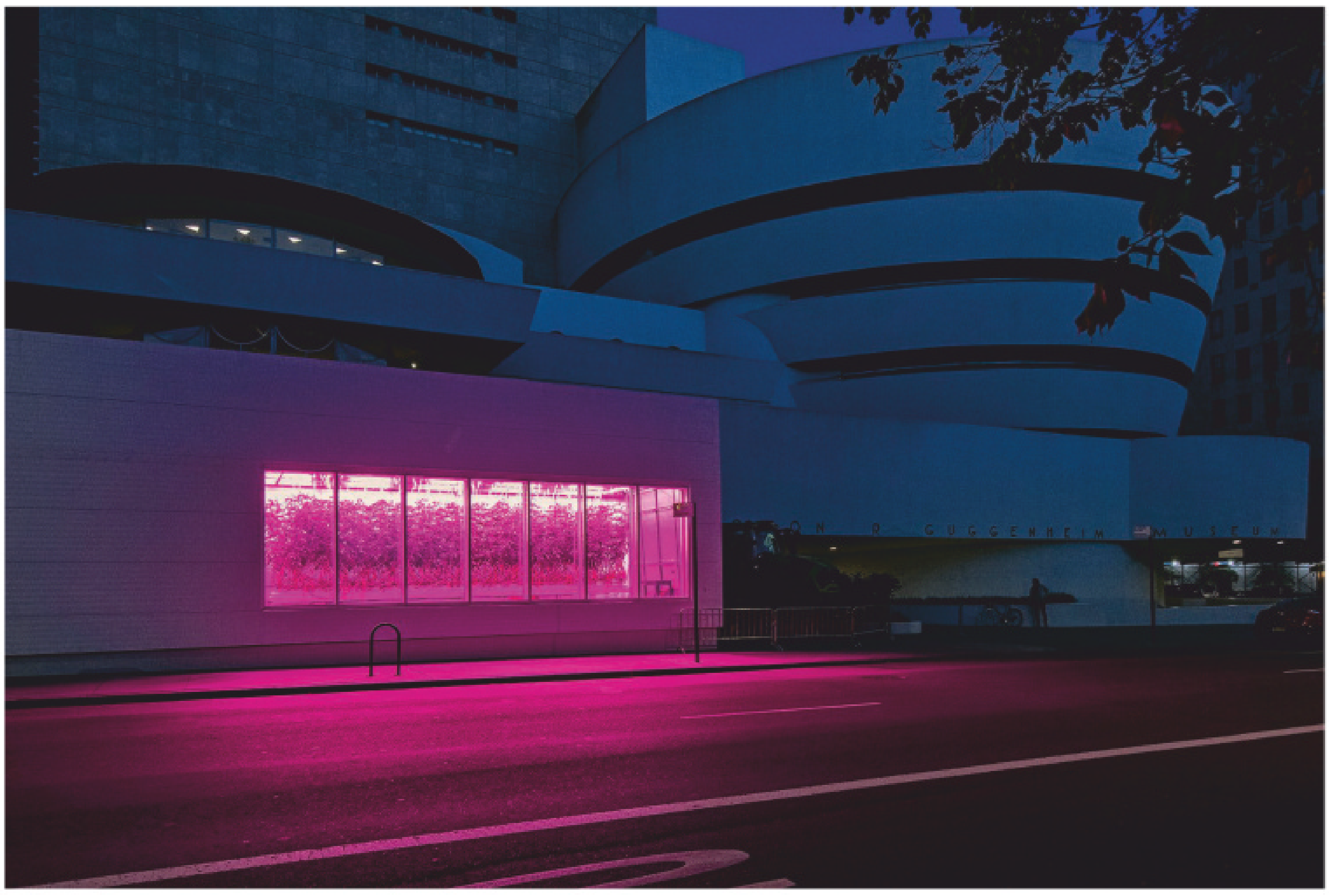
IN APRIL, TRUMP also fired Michael Atkinson, the intelligence community inspector general, and Department of Defense acting inspector general Glenn Fine—thus removing Fine from his post as head of the Pandemic Response Accountability Committee, which oversees some $2 trillion in coronavirus relief aid. And on May 1, Trump said he would replace Department of Health and Human Services senior deputy IG Christi Grimm, who drew Trump’s ire after releasing an April report that said hospitals were experiencing “severe shortages of testing supplies and extended waits for test results” during the pandemic.

In some corners of Washington, Trump’s moves to curtail the watchdogs’ work are welcomed as part of a long-running vision of a return to a more muscular Executive Branch. It has been supported by Attorney General William Barr and Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell, among others.

So far, only a handful of Republicans have questioned Linick’s firing. On May 18, Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa, the senior Republican in the Senate and a longtime champion of inspectors general, demanded that the President explain Linick’s dismissal, writing Trump that the government’s in-house watchdogs “should be free from partisan political interference from either the Executive or the Legislative branch.”

Others see Trump’s moves as part of a crisis that is gathering force under the cover of the unprecedented public-health emergency of COVID-19. Hempowicz of the Project on Government Oversight likens the effect of Trump’s actions to a frog being boiled alive so slowly that it doesn’t jump out of the pot. “Unless Congress steps up in a bipartisan way,” she says, “the effects of this will persist for several decades.”

PREVIOUS PAGE: REUTERS; GRASSLEY: CHIP SOMODEVILLA—GETTY IMAGES; GUGGENHEIM: JEENAH MOON—THE NEW YORK TIMES/REDUX



THE SHOW MUST GO ON A neon glow from the Guggenheim spills onto Fifth Avenue in Manhattan on May 13. Although the famous art museum was shuttered by the COVID-19 pandemic in March, a crop of cherry tomatoes continues to grow under pink light from the exhibition "Countryside, The Future." Every day, an indoor-crop specialist, who moved from Tel Aviv to New York in February, tends the tomatoes, which are donated weekly to food-distribution nonprofit City Harvest.

THE BULLETIN

A COVID-19 vaccine shows promise in early study

IN MARCH, THE BIOTECH COMPANY Moderna became one of the first to begin testing an experimental COVID-19 vaccine in healthy human volunteers. Now, the company has reported positive results from a small Phase 1 study: Moderna said on May 18 that there are encouraging early signs that the vaccine, which researchers have tested in three different doses, generates antibodies against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, in levels that are similar to or higher than those seen in the plasma of people who actually recovered from infections.

IMMUNE RESPONSE The Phase 1 study was actually designed to measure the safety, not the effectiveness, of the vaccine, but the level of antibodies seen in the participants shows that the vaccine can awaken the body's immune response to mount a defense against SARS-CoV-2. In addition, the company reports that in a preliminary analysis, antibodies from eight of the participants appeared to neutralize the virus in the lab.

CUTTING EDGE These findings are early validation of Moderna's technology, which veers from traditional vaccine design. While most vaccines depend on snippets of viral proteins or inactivated virus to activate the immune system, Moderna's is made of genetic material from the virus. "Honestly, we saw this data ... and were pretty elated," says Dr. Stephen Hoge, president of the company.

NEXT STEPS A Phase 2 study, with around 600 healthy volunteers, is expected to begin in June; if that goes well, the final Phase 3 studies could begin as early as July. Based on the urgency of the situation, on May 12 the Food and Drug Administration gave Moderna's vaccine fast-track status, to expedite the agency's review process. But even a fast track can move only so quickly: despite the race among a handful of groups testing vaccine candidates in people, none will likely be ready for mass immunization campaigns until at least next year.

—ALICE PARK

NEWS TICKER

China pledges $2 billion to virus response

Chinese President Xi Jinping announced at the World Health Organization assembly on May 18 that China would donate $2 billion over two years to fight COVID-19. The Trump Administration, which threatened on the same day to permanently halt U.S. funding for the WHO, **called the donation a distraction** from China's early failures.

House adopts distance voting

The Democratic-controlled House approved a rule change along party lines on May 15 to **temporarily allow remote committee work and proxy votes** in response to the pandemic. The Republican-controlled Senate already allows remote committee hearings but requires legislators to attend roll-call votes.

Genocide suspect arrested

A man accused of funding the 1994 Rwandan genocide that left at least 800,000 dead was **arrested in Paris on May 16 after more than two decades in hiding.** Félicien Kabuga, 84, allegedly funded militias, imported machetes and ran a radio station that spread hate.

NEWS TICKER

All U.S. states begin to reopen

With Connecticut's partial ending of its lockdown on May 20, all 50 U.S. states have begun to lift COVID-19 shutdown measures. Health experts warn that some may be moving too fast, as **only 16 states recorded a drop of more than 10% in average daily cases** in the week ending May 19.

Protests in Chile over food shortages

Despite a coronavirus lockdown in Chile, crowds of protesters **clashed with police on the outskirts of Santiago** on May 18 as tensions rose over food shortages and the economic fallout of the pandemic. The government said it would provide 2.5 million baskets of food in response.

Amash ends White House bid

Representative Justin Amash announced he would not seek a third-party presidential nomination, on May 16, citing **"extraordinary challenges"** of the current environment. The former Republican from Michigan had said in April that he would explore a presidential bid with the Libertarian Party, bringing new uncertainty to the race.

POSTCARD

In Seoul, coronavirus puts an LGBTQ haven under pressure

ONE OF SOUTH KOREA'S FEW LGBTQ HAVENS lies on a craggy hill near a U.S. military base in an out-of-the-way part of Seoul's Itaewon district. After dark, bright signs bearing the names of clubs like Queen and Soho usually cast the neighborhood's streets in a multicolored glow. Those lights have been off since early May, replaced by the unwelcome glare of national attention after authorities linked a coronavirus cluster of at least 170 cases to bars and nightclubs in the neighborhood.

The South Korean government vowed to track down all 5,500 people who visited establishments in the area, sparking fears that the country's efficient, aggressive system of contact tracing could lead to people being outed and imperil the neighborhood's status as a discreet space where LGBTQ people can be themselves. South Korea ranks low among developed economies for LGBTQ acceptance, and many choose to keep their sexual orientation private to avoid discrimination from their family or at work.

"I worry about friends and acquaintances because not everyone has a family that supports them," says Heezy Yang, a well-known drag performer and visual artist. Yang says the neighborhood is one of the few places in the country where LGBTQ Koreans can gather without fear of judgment or discrimination.

Activists say the attention has sparked a surge in homophobia. One newspaper was widely criticized for articles that depicted gay men as promiscuous and prone to risky sexual behavior.

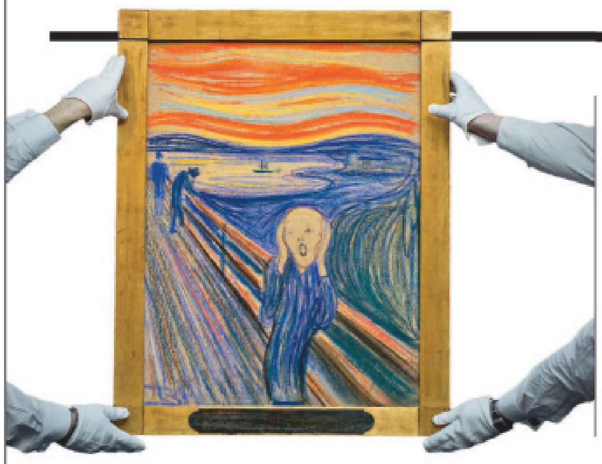
The situation obliges the government to strike a delicate balance. The country's success in tackling the coronavirus has relied on citizens ceding some privacy by allowing authorities to track their movements through mobile-phone data. Public-health officials release highly detailed information about the movements of each known COVID-19 case. Authorities are now seeking a way to continue such tracking without inadvertently disclosing information that could lead to neighbors and colleagues learning that an infected person visited a gay bar.

South Korea has won plaudits abroad for stamping out an initial COVID-19 outbreak in February and keeping case numbers low without imposing harsh lockdowns. But the nightclub cluster caused cases in the country of 52 million to spike just after the government relaxed social-distancing guidelines.

Experts say authorities have the tools in place to contain the outbreak, though some worry the mistrust it sparked could erase recent gains by the LGBTQ community.

But Yang says the backlash is a sign that LGBTQ people in South Korea have a growing public profile. "Now we are vocal and visible, our status is higher now, and we're being talked about," he says. "I don't want everything that we've achieved to go away."

—STEVEN BOROWIEC/SEOUL



CULTURE

Artistic distancing

The colors in **Edvard Munch's famous painting *The Scream,* circa 1910,** are fading as the paint reacts to humid air, according to a study published May 15. To protect it, researchers suggest distancing it from crowds, as human breath can add to the damage. Here, other art that needed its space. —*Billy Perrigo*

FACE PALM

A statue of two clasped hands was removed from its position straddling a path in Salisbury, England, in February 2016 because people kept bumping into it while looking down at their cell phones, according to the sculptor.

NO LOUVRE LOST

In Paris, overcrowding in the Louvre—where, according to one survey, 80% of visitors on any given day are there to see the *Mona Lisa*—led gallery workers to strike in 2019. Some have called for Leonardo's best-known painting to be moved elsewhere.

MURAL SUPPORT

A painting on a garage wall in Port Talbot, Wales, by the graffiti artist Banksy was removed and relocated to a gallery in 2019 following months behind a protective screen after someone attempted (unsuccessfully) to remove it the previous year.

MUNCH: CARL COURT—AFP/GETTY IMAGES; WILLARD: RICHARD CARTWRIGHT—ABC/GETTY IMAGES; SHELTON: CARLO ALLEGRI—AP

DIED
Actor **Ken Osmond,** best known for playing Eddie Haskell on *Leave It to Beaver,* on May 18, at 76.

APPROVED
California utility PG&E's $13.5 billion bankruptcy settlement, by victims of **multiple wildfires linked to PG&E's equipment,** according to an initial tally announced by the company May 18.

CRASHED
A **Canadian Snowbirds jet,** in British Columbia, on May 17, killing one, during a flyover to honor those fighting the COVID-19 pandemic.

RESTARTED
Production by automakers **Ford, General Motors** and **Fiat Chrysler,** on May 18, after an eight-week shutdown.

INAUGURATED
Tsai Ing-wen, for a second term as Taiwan's President, on May 20. She was re-elected in January.

AGREED
Afghan President **Ashraf Ghani** and rival **Abdullah Abdullah,** to a power-sharing deal, on May 17, allowing Ghani to keep his office but granting concessions to Abdullah. It ended months of political crisis after both claimed victory in a September election.

FORMED
Tropical Storm Arthur, the first named storm of 2020, on May 16. This is the sixth consecutive year a storm has been named before the June 1 start of the Atlantic hurricane season.

Willard, filming an episode of Modern Family *in 2019, got his first TV acting credit for a 1966 episode of* Pistols 'n' Petticoats

DIED

Fred Willard

Singular satirist

By Rob Reiner

FRED WILLARD, WHO DIED ON MAY 15 AT 86, WAS A BRILLIANT satirist, and he did what I think is the best kind of satire; it's very close to the bone. You didn't know if it was supposed to be funny or if he was telling you an honest truth. We tried to do that with *This Is Spinal Tap,* and he did it with everything. When we were doing *Spinal Tap,* the cinematographer kept saying, "What's funny about this? This is what really happens," and I said, "No no no, it's a little bent." And that's what was great about Fred.

You need great observational skills to see a character like that—in *Best in Show* or with any of the characters Fred played, he would take a look at what someone would have actually said and how they were in their behavior, and then he would just tilt it ever so slightly. If you didn't look closely, you'd think, "That's the way they really are." Fred knew how to just tip it a little bit. If you played opposite him, you could never break him up. You'd laugh like crazy watching his stuff, but he was so committed and into the character that he'd never break.

Normally the instinct is to go overboard, to make people see, "Look, I'm making fun of this guy." When Fred was making fun of somebody, you almost didn't know he was doing it. But while usually satirists have a hard edge, he was the sweetest, most generous, kindest person—and you could actually have a conversation with him. That's what I'll always remember about Fred.

__Reiner__ is a filmmaker and actor

DIED

Lynn Shelton

Indie filmmaker

By Rosemarie DeWitt

WHEN I MET LYNN SHELTON, it was the most fast and furious love affair I think I've ever had with anybody in my life. An actress had dropped out of her film days before shooting was to begin on *Your Sister's Sister,* and Lynn called me. I was working on another project but, because it was Lynn, I begged everybody I was working with to please let me do both. It ended up being one of the best creative experiences I ever had, so of course, I wanted to do it again. And again. Sadly we lost her way too soon, on May 15 at age 54.

Lynn had the uncanny ability to make everyone she collaborated with feel like the magic ingredient in the recipe. Once, we were shooting a pivotal scene and didn't know what needed to happen. Lynn decided to just roll the camera and fly. When she watched it back, she realized that was the lightning-in-a-bottle scene, and she built much of the film backward around it. Warm-blooded human beings took precedence over any idea that she had come up with. Lynn was always open to letting the humanity of a film take over. We all knew that Lynn was the magic ingredient.

__DeWitt__ is an actor

Shelton in 2012

As the gig economy grows, its workers' paychecks shrink

By Alana Semuels

1. Shopping for dollars *Instacart worker Matt Gillette juggles multiple gigs but says the pay is barely enough to keep a roof over his head*

2. Driven to frustration *Jerome Gage, a Lyft driver, has lost most of his business and struggled to access unemployment benefits*

3. Supporting a family *Instacart shopper Gerald Timothee walks miles a day to make deliveries and sends money he earns to his family in Haiti*

FOR YEARS, JENNELL LÉVÊQUE HAS BEEN GETTING UP EARLY and swiping through her phone in the hope that Amazon Flex would drop some delivery shifts and she'd be quick enough to nab one. But since the COVID-19 pandemic, even with six apps open for various delivery platforms, Lévêque has gotten barely any jobs bringing packages, meals or groceries to customers. The problem is competition: the Facebook group she helps run for Instacart workers is deluged with requests from people suddenly wanting to shop for others.

Before the pandemic, there were millions of people like Lévêque who could make a living, or at least earn decent pocket money, off gig work: driving people from the airport to their homes, delivering dinners, designing logos for strangers half a world away. But with the U.S. unemployment rate approaching 15% and the International Monetary Fund predicting a 3% contraction in the global economy, people who have relied on gig work are seeing their earnings plummet as more people compete for jobs.

"Each week is getting worse and worse with every platform," says Lévêque, who is in her 40s and whose lament is borne out by company numbers. The platform Upwork, where people can sell skills like logo design and résumé writing, says it has seen a 50% increase in freelancer sign-ups since the pandemic began. Talkdesk, a startup that provides customer-service software, launched a gig-economy platform and got 10,000 new applications for gig work in two weeks. Instacart hired 300,000 additional workers in a month and said in late April it planned to add 250,000 more.

THOUGH MORE PEOPLE are using many of these services, the surge of new workers has disrupted the law of supply and demand. With at least 36 million newly jobless people in America alone as of mid-May, there are too many gig workers to make the gig economy viable for many of them. This may be irreversible as companies adapt to the reality of a global recession. By keeping head counts low, they'll drive more desperate people into side hustles, lowering the prices that workers can command.

"The rates on DoorDash and Uber Eats are the lowest I've ever seen, but they're all bad right now," says Lévêque, who's watched the trend unfold in recent weeks. Apps like Amazon Flex, whose drivers use their personal vehicles to make deliveries for the company, release delivery jobs at random times, and they are snapped up within seconds. Lévêque says some Amazon Flex drivers now park and wait near the company's warehouses in hopes this will help them beat the competition.

Apps like Instacart send "offers," which let workers see how much a customer has ordered, the amount they'll get paid, and what the tip will be. On some apps, these offers are lower than ever, Lévêque says. (Instacart says its shoppers are earning 60% more per batch of orders they complete in part because tips have nearly doubled. After the company hired more shoppers, batch availability fluctuated but is beginning to rebalance, the company says.) As we talked, Lévêque turned down a food-delivery offer for $3 because it wasn't worth the gas she'd use to do the job.

As more workers rush to apps, they're encountering people trying to make money off their situation. Even before the pandemic, hustlers had been selling access to bots that grabbed jobs before humans could, and charging potential workers to use these bots, says Matthew Telles, a longtime Instacart shopper who has been outspoken about the platform's flaws. As the apps get more crowded, he says, people desperate for income can't resist the bots. "It's an old-school racket," he says. Bots are also a problem on services like Amazon Flex, but Telles says Instacart in particular has become a target. (Instacart says that using unauthorized third parties in an effort to secure more batches is not permitted and that anyone found to be doing so will be deactivated.)

Delivery drivers like Lévêque, who lives in Redwood City, Calif., have one advantage—they are competing for jobs only with people from their own geographic area. On sites like Fiverr and Upwork, where people sell services as diverse as copywriting, digital marketing and voice acting, workers compete with others from around the world. Anyone with an Internet connection can vie for these gigs, and the worse the global economy gets, the more people will use these sites to look for work. The World Bank estimates that COVID-19 will cause the first increase in global poverty since 1998.

GILLETTE: EVELYN HOCKSTEIN—THE WASHINGTON POST/GETTY IMAGES; GAGE: JESSICA PONS—THE NEW YORK TIMES/REDUX; TIMOTHEE: BRITTANY NEWMAN—THE NEW YORK TIMES/REDUX

2

3

People in creative fields are struggling more than coders and other tech freelancers to find work during this pandemic, according to the Oxford Internet Institute.

"It's a race to the bottom, honestly," says Melanie Nichols, a 40-year-old marketer who freelances for tech startups. With business slowing in the wake of the pandemic, Nichols created an Upwork account from England, where she was staying with family, to earn some extra money. Before the pandemic, she could charge clients $100 to $150 an hour. On Upwork, Nichols says, clients advertise jobs that require the same amount of work but pay $50 an hour or less. Nichols says she's applied for 20 jobs since March and landed one. It ended up being more work than she was pitched, so Nichols did 25 hours of labor for 10 hours of pay. "Upwork seems to be such a good idea," she says, "but I'd be curious to find people who are actually making money from it."

Steven Lee Notar, 24, is in the same situation. He worked as a graphic designer at a media agency in Germany until the company first reduced his hours and then laid him off. He started advertising on Fiverr for services like designing online ads, posters and business cards, but says he has to set his prices low to get any orders. "A lot of people in my field have turned to the website," Notar says. "It is a lot of supply but not a lot of demand."

Sites like Upwork and Fiverr say the demand is still there. Adam Ozimek, the chief economist at Upwork, says that a third of *Fortune* 500 companies now use the platform, and that client spending has been stable since the pandemic hit. Upwork has not tracked whether freelancer pay rates have gone down, but Ozimek argues that Upwork's borderless business model is good particularly for U.S. gig workers because it gives them the freedom to find employers anywhere, not just in their city or country. "This is where the U.S. has the advantage," he says. "The U.S. leads the world in skilled services, and our freelancers do find work all over the world."

WHAT WORRIES some workers is that this increased competition for less pay is going to become the new normal as businesses try to stay lean by spending as little as possible. One survey found that as early as 2017, average hourly earnings on some platforms like Clickworker and Amazon's Mechanical Turk were as low as $2 to $6.50 an hour. Twitter has said that going forward, many employees could work from home forever if they so desired. But once people are working from home, what's the incentive to keep them on as salaried employees? Arguably, companies could save money and balance their budgets by hiring overseas marketers or coders willing to work for less money and no benefits. The global market for online labor has grown 70% in the past four years alone. Giant marketing companies like WPP and Omnicom have already talked about significant head-count reductions going forward. They could turn to online freelancers once business starts up again.

'It is a lot of supply but not a lot of demand.'

STEVEN LEE NOTAR, graphic designer in the gig economy

There are signs this transition is already happening. Companies that are trying to grow online are hiring many gig workers on Fiverr, and Fiverr has seen an increase in demand for these employees, the company said on its earnings call in May. Fiverr hit all-time daily revenue records four times in April, CEO Micha Kaufman said. Nichols, the marketer, says she has seen big advertising agencies that have laid off hundreds of people hiring gig workers for marketing jobs on Upwork. Upwork said on its May earnings call that a multinational cybersecurity company used Upwork to find designers and developers, and a sports-marketing agency hired software developers and animators on the site for projects. Aside from a moral obligation to treat workers well and pay them a living wage, there's nothing to prevent more companies from jettisoning full-time employees and shifting to lower-paid gig workers.

They'd just be following what has been happening for decades in other fields. Just as manufacturers shifted to overseas contractors to save money and as gig-economy apps drove down wages for taxi and delivery drivers, the pandemic has hastened the gig-ification of white collar jobs. The gig world might have been a crowded space before COVID-19, but the booming economy masked its workers' struggles because many of them could find other jobs to supplement their income. Now, that extra work has dried up, and their desperation is more evident than ever. When gig work is the only pie that's available to millions of people, sharing it means that some don't even get crumbs. □

How to navigate today's volatile market

By Kevin Kelleher

EVERY THREE MONTHS, PUBLICLY TRADED companies report both their actual financial earnings and their expected prospects over the near future. Investors closely watch these reports for signs of promise or trouble, in a ritual not unlike reading tea leaves. But with the COVID-19 crisis upending business plans left and right, interpreting those leaves is more challenging than ever.

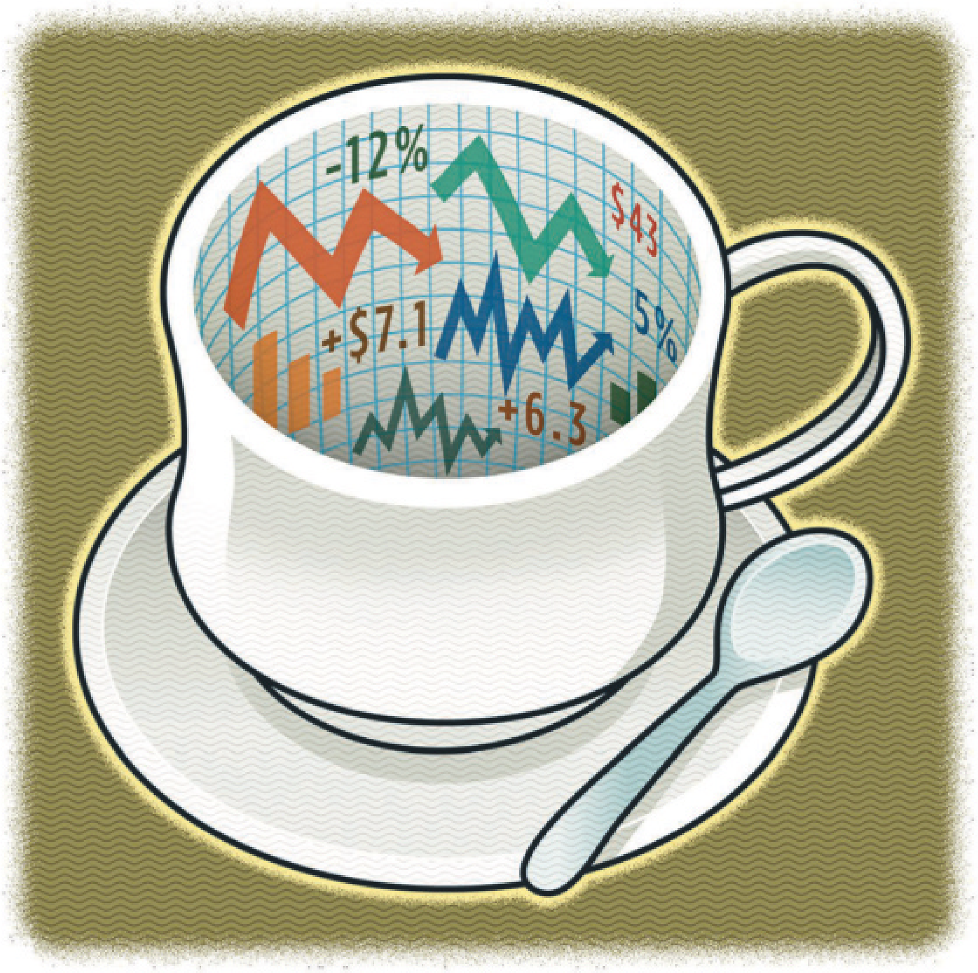


ILLUSTRATION BY PETER AND MARIA HOEY FOR TIME

Looking at first-quarter earnings reports from the nearly 90% of S&P 500 companies that have reported them so far reveals signs of trouble, but not cataclysmic shock: revenue rose an aggregate 0.6%, while net income fell 14%, according to FactSet. But COVID-19 shutdowns only began in late March, meaning their economic effects won't truly show up until the next earnings season. Right now, far more telling is the fact that only 1 in 5 S&P 500 companies is offering future guidance, while 86 have withdrawn previously issued annual guidance.

"There's an unprecedented degree of uncertainty," says Marvin Loh, global macrostrategist at investment firm State Street. "One of the things we're learning is that the companies themselves just don't know." In January, he predicted corporate earnings would fall 6% this year. Now, Loh predicts a 21% drop. Still, he's optimistic a rebound will eventually come. "It's just the timing is being pushed back," he says.

FOR INVESTORS, the challenge is twofold: predicting when that rebound will come, and picking which stocks will win and which will lose when it does. Absent corporate guidance, that's harder than usual—and it's usually very hard. But a clearer picture is starting to emerge. Since the S&P 500 peaked three months ago, tech giants like Amazon and Netflix have fared well, as have drugmakers like Gilead. Energy companies like Halliburton have been hit hard, along with banks like Wells Fargo. Retailers like Nordstrom and Victoria's Secret parent company L Brands have suffered as shoppers stay home, but those catering to homebodies, like Domino's and Kroger, are thriving.

Loh and others expect those trends to continue. How long they do may come down to two big questions. First, even as states begin lifting their lockdowns, will consumers feel it's safe enough to go out to shop and eat? "We have to see some kind of stabilization of the pandemic first," says Sahak Manuelian, head of equity trading at Wedbush Securities. Secondly, with millions out of work and the future so hazy, will people actually want to spend money? Unemployment figures and near real-time data from restaurant booking services like OpenTable could provide some answers.

Investors should heed another risk too: a wave of corporate insolvencies among companies without the resources to weather this storm. J.Crew, JCPenney and Neiman Marcus have already filed for bankruptcy, while Hertz and a slew of beleaguered oil companies could be next. That's bad news for those companies' shareholders, but it's also a threat to wider economic growth—as companies go bankrupt, it can jeopardize the banks stuck holding their bad loans. That the federal government has been helping some struggling companies is propping up markets—for now. "It's hard for equities to keep going down when there's so much relief money sloshing around," says Manuelian. How long that lasts is anybody's guess.

What should investors look for in the coming months? Many of the companies that are performing well right now have strong balance sheets—that is, they're strong in assets and not overburdened with debt. "Looking at the balance sheet is first and foremost," says Loh, "and then move on to growth prospects." After years of easy, set-it-and-forget-it stock gains, it looks like fundamental analysis is set to make a big comeback. "A basic question is whether you feel comfortable that a company is going to be in business in the next couple of years," says Loh.

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[2] Expense ratio data as of 3/29/2019. Based on a comparison of total expense ratios for U.S. communication services sector-level ETFs with similar holdings and investment objectives, within the universe of 12 U.S. ETFs in the Morningstar Communications category.

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As of 11/30/2018, this fund changed its name from Fidelity Select Telecommunication Services Portfolio.

[3] Source: Standard & Poor's, FactSet, as of June 30, 2018.

Because of their narrow focus, sector investments tend to be more volatile than investments that diversify across many sectors and companies.

Before investing in any mutual fund or exchange-traded fund, you should consider its investment objectives, risks, charges, and expenses. Contact Fidelity for a prospectus, an offering circular, or, if available, a summary prospectus containing this information. Read it carefully.

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Play ball—or balk? The risks and rewards of restarting sports

By Sean Gregory

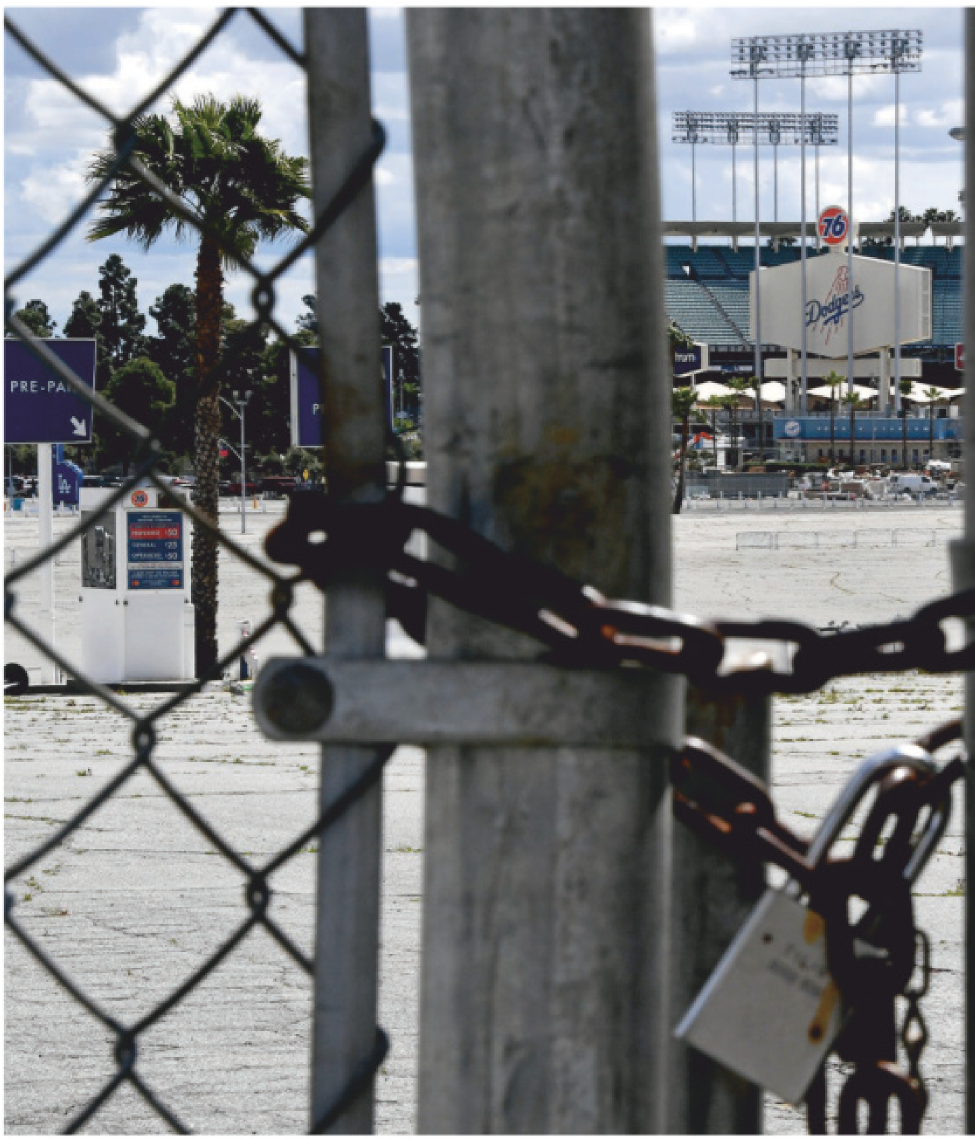
IN A NEAR EMPTY ARENA IN JACKSONVILLE, FLA., ON MAY 9, Ultimate Fighting Championship held its first event in the U.S. since COVID-19 dealt American pro sports a knockout blow. One of the two dozen fighters on the card—and two of his cornermen—had been removed from the lineup after testing positive for the virus, but UFC 249 carried on. The event ended up drawing more than 700,000 pay-per-view purchases, according to the *Sports Business Journal,* confirmation—as if any were needed—of the country's pent-up demand for live sports. About a week later, NASCAR staged its first pandemic-era race on May 17 in Darlington, S.C., with safety measures in place. Pit road crew members, for example, wore either fireproof masks or face screens. Kevin Harvick won the Real Heroes 400, whose average viewership of 6.3 million represented a 38% increase over that of NASCAR's last race, on March 8 in Phoenix. The Darlington race was NASCAR's most-watched event, excluding the Daytona 500, since 2017.

But while the reboot of auto racing and mixed martial arts is an early signal of America's reopening, there will be no normality in sports without the comeback of at least one of the "Big Three" major team-sports leagues—the MLB, NBA or NFL. Baseball, basketball and football teams are part of the civic fabric of municipalities across the country. The return of baseball, in particular, carries special significance: its leisurely cadence remains the daily background rhythm of U.S. life.

Sports may seem like the essence of nonessential business, but there are reasons so many people are anxious for a return to the field. Isolated fans, already suffering economically or otherwise, crave the psychic rewards. With game-day jobs at stake, contests would provide communities a financial lift. And then there's the symbolic power. Some semblance of pre-pandemic life would be awfully nice to recapture.

MLB OWNERS ARE TRYING, and their efforts expose just how difficult a proposition that first pitch will be. They've already approved a tentative plan that calls for an 82-game season—instead of the typical 162-game slate—that would begin in early July. No fans would be permitted, at least not at first. Where allowed, games would be played in home stadiums. And to limit travel, teams would play only against teams in their divisions, plus regional interleague rivals. In a move sure to upset some National League purists, all teams would use the designated hitter to reduce the risk of pitcher injuries. Meanwhile, the playoffs would be expanded from five teams in each league to seven. Active rosters would also be expanded, to 30 players plus a 20-man taxi squad, since minor-league baseball could effectively be canceled this year.

As the players' union and the owners negotiate, economics is sure to be a sticking point. The owners are considering a 50-50 split of revenues from this season with the players, while the players say they've already agreed to a prorated salary structure (in the case of an 82-game season, they'd receive around half of their contracted 2020 wages). Since gate receipts reportedly account for up to 40% of baseball's overall revenues, a 50-50 split from a short season with no fans would almost certainly result in a significant pay cut for the players.



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A locked gate at Dodger Stadium at what was to be the start of the season

KEITH BIRMINGHAM—MEDIANEWS GROUP/PASADENA STAR-NEWS/GETTY IMAGES

Money aside, the plan has other complications. Los Angeles County, for example, has suggested that stay-at-home orders could last for another three months—so what do the L.A. Dodgers do? Canada requires a 14-day quarantine for asymptomatic travelers returning to the country. So can the Toronto Blue Jays play home games? The team could play at its spring-training facility in Dunedin, Fla., but that plan would increase the travel burden for many American and National League teams in the eastern divisions based in the Northeast, New England and Mid-Atlantic.

"This plan sounds possible," says Lee Igel, clinical associate professor at

the Preston Robert Tisch Institute for Global Sport of NYU's School of Professional Studies, and a member of an advisory panel consulting mayors on the safe reopening of sports and recreation. "But when you start to lay things out, you hit natural stopping points where you go, 'Oh, wait a minute here.'"

As with so many aspects of reopening, the return of American sports may come down to testing. "I think a plan like this would have to be paired with daily testing," says Zachary Binney, an epidemiologist at Emory University in Atlanta. "I really don't see how you can even begin to talk about something like that being done safely with testing any less frequent than that."

Sports events like the UFC's take place intermittently, in one centralized arena. NASCAR races are weekly, at a specific track. So it's easier to test for COVID-19 in UFC and NASCAR. But baseball is a daily activity, taking place in facilities across the country and Canada. Each team has dozens of players, coaches and support staff. Daily testing would require a considerable investment, in a country that's already falling short of requirements to safely reopen: the Harvard Global Health Institute says the U.S. needs to be conducting 900,000 tests per day; according to the COVID Tracking Project, on May 17, U.S. tests per day exceeded 400,000 for the first time. "The problem is going to be, will there be enough testing available for the general public?" says Jill Weatherhead, an infectious-disease specialist at the Baylor College of Medicine. "Will there be enough testing to allocate to sporting events to keep the players safe?" (MLB commissioner Rob Manfred has said players would be tested "multiple times a week," and baseball plans to invest in additional tests for the general public as well as for players and team employees).

Players also risk carrying the virus from the locker room to their communities, and vice versa. And though MLB strives to cut down on travel, they'd still have to shuttle from city to city. "It's going to potentially be an awful lot of moving people from areas that are hotter with virus to areas that have fewer cases," says Binney. "So how are the areas with fewer cases going to feel about that? You raise the risk of possibly seeing epidemics in new areas."

Some players are asking these questions too. Washington Nationals relief pitcher Sean Doolittle took to social media to express skepticism about the return plan. "It feels like the conversation about an MLB restart has shifted to the economic issues and that's really frustrating," he wrote on Twitter. "Until there's a vaccine, let's focus on keeping everyone as safe as possible & minimizing the risks so we can play baseball."

Tampa Bay Rays pitcher Blake Snell said during a May 14 Twitch stream that he wouldn't want to play for a reduced salary. "Bro, I'm risking my life," he said.

And the potential for any plan to become a reality remains at the mercy of how the virus acts across dozens of MLB markets. "There are no good answers here," says Binney. "You're taking on a lot of risk with this plan."

ACROSS THE WORLD, some pro team-sports leagues have already returned to play. The Korean Baseball League started its season on May 5, with widespread testing and cardboard cutouts of fans in the stands; ESPN signed a deal to show the games in the U.S. On May 16, Germany's Bundesliga became the first major European soccer league to relaunch, though also without fans. (As of May 19, the U.S. COVID-19 mortality rate, per 100,000 people, was nearly three times as high as Germany's, and almost 55 times as high as South Korea's.)

0

MLB, NBA, NHL and MLS games played since March 12

$5 BILLION

Value of lost ticket revenue if a full 162-game Major League Baseball season is played without fans, according to TicketIQ

12

Number of schools in the Division II California Collegiate Athletic Association that have suspended fall sports

In the U.S., Major League Soccer is considering sending its 26 teams to a summer tournament in Orlando; Florida Governor Ron DeSantis has encouraged sports leagues to consider playing in his state. The NBA's plans to finish its suspended season are still uncertain, while the NFL has largely been able to conduct business as usual, as the pandemic hit during its off-season. Free-agency moves—Tom Brady and Rob Gronkowski are now Tampa Bay Bucs!—and the NFL's virtual draft have helped fill the odd void of sports news.

Since summer is the heart of baseball's season, MLB and its players will bear the brunt of increased pressure to make actual games a reality. For now, their discussions continue—but no matter what they eventually agree on, the ongoing pandemic introduces a layer of uncertainty that can't be negotiated away. "We're not seeing massive declines across the country," says Baylor's Weatherhead. "To make predictions and plan what is going to happen on July 1 is not possible."

Peloton CEO **John Foley** wants to make the most of staying home

By Eben Shapiro

LEADERSHIP IN BUSINESS HAS NEVER BEEN more important nor more urgently tested. To help understand what leadership in today's economy requires, TIME is starting the Leadership Brief, a new weekly interview series with the world's most influential CEOs. Our first interview is with John Foley, the CEO of Peloton. The startup, which was founded in 2012 in New York City and sold its first bike in 2013, now has a market cap of $12.7 billion. It has 3,500 employees worldwide and more than 2.6 million members taking its online classes.

Peloton, which is benefiting from soaring demand for its bikes, quickly recognized a new opportunity among potential customers who are searching to address mental and physical health while sheltering at home. More than 1 million people have taken advantage of the company's offer for free trial subscriptions. Peloton is also continuing to pay rent on its nearly 100 retail stores, even though the locations are temporarily closed, something Foley calls a "questionable business decision on just a financial metric. Let's do what's right for our communities." Foley, 49, developed his leadership skills early, when in his first job out of college he managed 120 people on the night shift of a candy plant for Mars Inc., in Waco, Texas, but learned to be hands-off.

As a CEO, he is still happy to let the specialists do their jobs. He says he sometimes doesn't talk to his chief technology officer for months at a time. Foley says he is most concerned with people and culture issues, building a world-class management team that can grow into a $500 billion company. "I care about how people are getting along and the team spirit and the intangible of how our team is feeling," he says. "It's something I'm passionate about."

In coming weeks, we are interviewing the heads of some of the world's biggest companies. We are eager to hear from you; please email me at **leadership@time.com.**

Do you remember when you first heard about COVID-19? I do. Wayne Holman, who is a health care investor and an investor in Peloton—a good friend of mine for the last 15 or 20 years—texted me and said, "There's this COVID strain in this Wuhan province in China. You should have it on your radar. It's highly contagious, and you should put your teams on alert and figure out a contingency plan for your supply chain in Asia." This was late January. It came on my radar as the threat was to the Asian supply chain, not yet a U.S. threat.

How is your business changing in the current moment? I don't think people are going to rush back to crowded gyms. I just don't see that happening. The gym model was challenged yesterday. And I think it will be even more challenged tomorrow.

Has the pandemic changed your view of the size of your potential market? It hasn't changed my view at all. I see a couple hundred million people on the Peloton platform in 15 years. But it has changed other people's views for sure.

There was a period when your company was viewed as an accoutrement of the elite, and you faced a lot of backlash for the "Peloton wife" ad as being sexist and out of touch. Were you surprised by the response? It has been a roller coaster. It's been emotional for me because we do think we're building something special. We do think we're making people's lives better. And when people criticize us and make fun of us, it gets to me, to be totally honest. I've developed thick skin, but it's a little bit of a head-scratcher.

I had seen the commercial, and we struggled with telling the story of how special what happens on the Peloton platform is. The world, unfortunately, or some people—cynics—the cynical blogosphere at least still sees fitness equipment as rote weight loss. It was unfortunate because that's never been part of our brand.

You have extended your standard 30-day free offer for your digital classes to 90 days so anybody at home could sign up to take classes for free. Right around the time of COVID, we all shifted into a couple of different

QUICK FACTS

Favorite business book
"Jack Welch's *Winning*. It's kind of a Ph.D.-level in leadership."

Favorite author
"David McCullough."

New record
In April, Peloton's debut "Live from Home" ride broke the previous record for largest live class, with 23,000 participants.

COURTESY JOHN FOLEY

things of: How do you work through this? How do you work from home? And then, How do we help? What can we do for our communities and our members and our employees? And the 90-day free trial was such a quick, easy, obvious—I forget even where it came from in the company. But within 12 hours, we had, through text and email, created a chain of "We should do this 90-day free trial."

How many people have signed up? Within 45 days, we had I think close to 1.2 million people who had jumped on the trial.

Is a cheaper bike in the offing? Well, let's not call anything cheap that Peloton does. Let's say that a year or two from now, we might have two products in the fitness category. And that would give us options on how we lean on price and how we stratify the prices so that more people can afford it.

What's the optimal price point, $1,000? I wouldn't think about it as an initial cash outlay. I would think about it as a monthly payment. I think if you can get to 20 bucks a month per person, you're starting to get below low-end gym-chain affordability, and we think that that's a pretty big opportunity for Peloton.

I understand you put yourself through college working in a factory. My dad was an airline pilot, and when I got to Georgia Tech, we decided to go into what was called a co-op program. I worked six months a year in Waco, Texas, as an engineer to get work experience and to pay my way through Georgia Tech. After I graduated from Georgia Tech as an engineer, I took a job there. They paid really well, $46,000 a year, which was 50% more than what kids were making back in the early '90s. I worked the midnight shift as a shift manager making Skittles and Starbursts in a candy-manufacturing plant.

You went to Harvard Business School and you worked the night shift at a candy factory. Can you share the most valuable thing you learned at each place? I learned a lot about people from both experiences. On the manufacturing side, I became a manager at 22 years old of 120 people, and I learned to get out of the way because I didn't know anything at 22. It was a weird management style, letting people do their thing. Harvard Business School was also a great experience for me, coming from the Florida Keys. I was always intimidated by Ivy League kids and the pedigree in general, whether it was Goldman Sachs or McKinsey. Harvard Business School kind of opened my eyes that no one's really smarter than the next person.

How would your colleagues, your co-founders, describe your strengths as a manager? I'm not sure they'd say I have many strengths at all. I do think that they will agree that I'm pretty hungry. Our team is pretty hungry. □

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ECONOMY

OUR FAILED SAFETY NETS

By Zachary Karabell

An additional 2.98 million people filed for unemployment in the beginning of May, bringing the total lost jobs to at least 36 million by official tallies, and likely significantly more once discouraged and gig workers are factored in. Until this March, the most unemployment claims ever filed in one week was fewer than 700,000. ▶

INSIDE

WHAT HAPPENS TO OUR SMILES BEHIND OUR MASKS

WHY I'M EMBRACING MY GRAY HAIR DURING THE PANDEMIC

A TARGETED LOCKDOWN IS THE BEST WAY TO REOPEN

The primary reason for this massive surge in unemployment is of course the pandemic and the economic shutdowns to contain it. But government policy is also to blame.

The virus has exposed the shambles of how the U.S. has structured its safety nets since the Great Depression. It is a system that barely works in stable times but which in a crisis creates incentives for companies to fire people even if they intend to rehire them several months later. We have managed, in a few short weeks, to design the worst of all possible worlds: a massive aid package (the $2 trillion CARES Act) that incentivizes unemployment (despite the loans that came too late to keep some workers on payroll), pays people more than they would if they stayed employed (thanks to extra money for unemployment benefits) and makes everyone from large companies to gig workers more insecure about the future. The goal of a safety net is to help people feel … safe. Ours doesn't.

A boarded-up storefront in Las Vegas, in May, where the jobless rate is estimated at 25%

PEOPLE ARE deeply apprehensive. Part of that is unequivocal fear of the virus. No amount of government spending could alleviate that quickly. Economic anxiety is another matter. The contrast with the E.U. and Asia is striking. In many of those nations, governments have guaranteed the majority of worker payrolls and salaries. As a result, most companies have had no need or incentive to fire workers en masse, at least not immediately, and they'll be able to restart operations faster.

Compare the situation in the U.S. Say you had a restaurant business with several outlets and a hundred employees in March that was modestly profitable prepandemic. Faced with months of no revenue, you could pay your workers and rent perhaps for a month before cash ran out. The CARES Act wasn't passed until the end of March, about a week after the start of the shutdowns, but those funds didn't start flowing till a few weeks later. But you knew that regular unemployment benefits would come quickly and would at least provide your workers with basic income. So you furlough them, allowing them to maintain health insurance, or you fire them outright. And then, when that extra $600 kicks in, and you know those payments will last until at least the end of July, it makes no sense to rehire them right now.

Then take a megacompany like Disney, which furloughed tens of thousands of employees. The Federal Reserve lending program for companies doesn't help you because you are too big, and you've closed theme parks with no reopening date. So you do the same as that small business. And for medium-size companies, the Fed's lending program doesn't have a launch date yet, so given the urgent need to conserve cash, you too furlough or fire. And that's in large part why we have 36 million filing for unemployment.

While some of the unemployed will do as well with the government benefits as they would have with a job, we know that getting fired can be traumatic and being unemployed is a recipe for insecurity and caution. Added to that is the uncertainty about costs of health care. The instinct is to save and conserve and cut back to essentials, which is individually rational but collectively disastrous for the economy.

We can't undo what's been done. But we can improve in the future. With warnings of a second wave in the fall, planning for a next round of shutdowns is essential, as is restructuring government aid programs going forward. Some hiring will return in the coming months, and to ensure that those jobs don't once again get eliminated precipitously, government at both the federal and state levels needs to be ready to open the spigot quickly and directly so that companies have neither the incentive nor the need to fire employees. Having a streamlined process of turning on emergency relief the moment it is needed, with clear and simple rules that all businesses and workers understand in advance, is essential—and possible if there is the political will to do things differently.

Karabell is a writer and investor

SHORT READS

Highlights from stories on **time.com/ideas**

What really matters

The random lethality of COVID-19 reminds TIME editor at large Karl Vick of his days reporting in war zones. Shared risk creates an extraordinary bond with the person sharing it with you, and in lockdown that person is someone you already love: **"Against this backdrop, what you value in life is more vivid."**

Call it a comeback

The humpback-whale population had been devastated by commercial whaling, but now it appears to have rebounded to about 93% of its original size. **"This is great news for the whales, of course, but also for the climate,"** writes Kirsten Thompson, a marine scientist and lecturer at the University of Exeter.

Knowing your rights

A new Trump Administration rule about sexual assault on campus is long and difficult to understand, writes Nicole Bedera, a doctoral candidate in sociology at the University of Michigan: **"If survivors can't understand their rights, it's very unlikely that they will use them."**

LAS VEGAS: SEAN MURRAY

THE RISK REPORT

Mexico’s popular President gambles on reopening

By Ian Bremmer

MEXICO FACES MORE than its share of threats these days. The human and economic toll of the country’s coronavirus crisis is rising. Low oil prices have cut deeply into its oil exports, a crucial source of government revenue. Criminal gangs continue their spree of violence across the country. So why is Mexico’s President, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, still so popular? How long can his popularity last?

Begin with the oil story. For the first three months of this year, Pemex, Mexico’s state-owned oil company, reported its worst quarter ever, in part because of COVID-19’s impact on oil demand, the Russian-Saudi price war and a steep fall in Mexico’s currency. That’s a heavy blow to the political agenda of a President who sees Pemex and future oil production as central to a brighter economic future. Financial losses totaled more than $23 billion, about 2.3% of the country’s GDP.

Then there’s the issue of crime. Even before the coronavirus, López Obrador was grappling with the chronic problem of murderous drug gangs and violence against women. According to official statistics, 2019 was Mexico’s most violent year ever.

He showed reporters a lucky clover and a $2 bill that he carried in his wallet for protection against COVID-19

BUT IT’S THE CORONAVIRUS that now dominates news in Mexico. On May 18, López Obrador began a plan to reopen Mexico’s locked-down economy in three phases. The first is a full reopening that’s limited to cities and towns with no confirmed COVID cases. A second phase, unfolding over the rest of May, will focus on economically vital sectors—like the construction, automotive and mining industries—nationwide. The third phase will reopen the rest of the economy.

In the pandemic’s earliest days, López Obrador expressed doubt about the seriousness of the threat coronavirus poses for Mexico and warned of the dangers of restricting commerce for too long. During a press conference on March 18, he showed reporters a lucky clover and a $2 bill that he carried in his wallet for protection against COVID-19 infection. He changed his tone considerably in the days that followed, while allowing his health team to take the crisis lead, and declared a national emergency on March 30, but he has still ordered fewer restrictions than other national leaders and has pushed to restart the economy soon.

It’s a risky strategy. Mexico has the lowest testing rate in the 37 countries that are members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Doctors and nurses have staged public protests to highlight the lack of personal protective equipment in many hospitals. And while the country officially reported a total of 51,633 confirmed cases and 5,332 deaths as of May 19, this data likely underreports the real situation (possibly by a factor of 10), and press stories of underreported deaths, particularly in Mexico City, and overflowing morgues and funeral homes have raised doubts about the reliability of the death count. These reports, both foreign and domestic, raise the stakes for López Obrador’s political gamble in choosing to reopen without a clearer idea of how widespread COVID really is.

Despite all this, the President’s popularity remains at 66%. That’s down from 82% in February 2019, but it’s still a number that most world leaders would love to have. How is López Obrador defying political gravity? One reason is that he’s just a supremely gifted and personally likable politician who is leading a people who want better times badly enough to give him the benefit of the doubt.

The reopening of Mexico’s economy is his toughest test yet. If his gambit fails, his political good fortune might finally be finished.

QUICK TALK

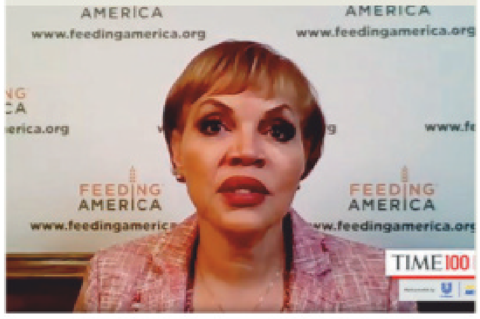
The hunger crisis

Claire Babineaux-Fontenot, CEO of Feeding America, on how the nation’s largest domestic hunger-relief organization is adapting:

Can you tell us about the reality on the ground?
Around the U.S., we’ve seen precipitous increases in demand. Some of our food banks have seen as much as 200% overall increase in demand. And at [the height of need] so far, it went up to an average of 70% increase.

Food banks are not receiving as many donations. How is Feeding America dealing with that?
Our estimates are that over the course of the first six months of this pandemic [the funding shortfall for our] network is going to be to the tune of about $1.5 billion.

What do we do as a country that is supposed to be the wealthiest in the world about this kind of food insecurity?
My concern is what’s going to happen when the cameras are gone. It is likely that another 20 million people are going to be food-insecure. —HALEY SWEETLAND EDWARDS



SOCIETY

When in doubt, just assume I'm smiling

By Belinda Luscombe

I MISS SMILING. I DON'T MISS IT IN THE INSPIRATIONAL poster "the whole world smiles with me" way. I don't miss it, as another poster says, because I can no longer "intimidate those who wish to destroy me." I don't miss it because "happiness looks gorgeous on me," although I did put in three very formative years of hard time in the orthodontia trenches—20 months of braces and six retainers—so it looks at least marginally better than it used to.

I miss smiling because it's one of the handiest utensils in the communication drawer and my mask has locked it away. Yes, it's just a facial expression: a deployment of the zygomaticus muscles, sometimes authentic, sometimes a placeholder because the real emotion we're feeling is best not expressed. But as humans, we learn at the age of approximately 42 days that smiling is a useful way of getting people to feel good about themselves and therefore us. (The "world smiles with you" thing actually works—for babies.)

We continue to refine the way we use that smile to communicate information—from "you're here!" to "you're cute" to "you're not meant to take that seriously, although you also kind of are"—until we no longer have teeth. And now, suddenly, those skills, all that practice, are useless. We have lost our favorite communication gizmo just when we need more ways to connect than ever.

Trying to interact with other humans without being able to smile is the facial equivalent of communicating via text message; it's easy to be misunderstood. Your expression and words lack context. People wonder: Are you wincing at me? Are you grinding your jaw? Do you just have a lot of crow's-feet? Was what you said an insult or a joke?

Trying to interact with other humans without being able to smile is the facial equivalent of communicating via text

According to Paula Niedenthal, a psychologist who heads up the Niedenthal Emotions Lab at the University of Wisconsin–Madison and has studied facial expression extensively, there are three types of smiles: those that express pleasure at a reward or surprise, like when you get to see your friends in person after a prolonged separation (soon, please); those that convey a desire to be friendly, or at least non-threatening, which she calls smiles of affiliation; and those that show dominance, like the one Dirty Harry gives when he asks a certain punk if he feels lucky.

Her studies have shown that it's harder to tell the difference between affiliative smiles and dominant ones if you can't see the lower half of the face. In those situations, people have to rely on other clues. She gives the example of walking a dog that suddenly barks at a passerby. A quick look at an unmasked person's face will confirm whether the passerby is smiling because he thinks he's much better with his dog than you are or smiling because his dog is also occasionally silly. Behind a mask, this distinction is not so clear.

Niedenthal predicts that as mask use stretches on, people may rely more on the context of the situation to tell them how to interpret an interaction. "They will imagine that the context confers a reaction that is obvious, which of course will get everybody into a lot of trouble, because people in our culture respond with high variability to the same context," she says.

I HAVE TRIED to compensate for the communication gap by enhancing my other gestures. Upon approaching strangers in the street, I want to let them know that I am harmless and wish them well. In hard times, this message feels particularly urgent. Not being able to smile at them has forced me to wave or do a weird fighter-pilot-style salute. If I'm pulling aside to let them pass and can no longer offer an encouraging "you first" smile, I am reduced to airport-marshal gesticulations, which are about as effective as talking more loudly to someone whose language you don't speak.

But it's not just the recipient who gains from a grin. Smiling affects the smiler too. Studies have shown that it enhances the mood that produced the expression and helps us recall happier times. "Facial expression is not just output from the brain but also feeds back to the brain and has some consequences for subjective experience," says Niedenthal. "There is good evidence that smiling naturally has some effect on your ambient emotional state." In other words, masks may be making us more morose.

It almost never helps a situation to tell people to smile, so I won't, but I'm going to keep beaming, even if it can't be seen and sometimes is not entirely authentic. A fake smile, after all, is often given with good intentions, just as a mask is sometimes worn not to hide but to protect. ◻

ILLUSTRATIONS BY NATHALIE LEES FOR TIME

BEAUTY

Embracing my gray hair, possibly for good

By Sally Susman

THIS MORNING I ROSE FROM MY SLEEPLESS BED, MY BARE feet padding along the wooden floors to arrive at my bathroom sink. There, I brushed the nighttime off my teeth, took my temperature and ran a comb through my hair. More gray crept from my center part. Little estuaries of silver trickling through. I silently cheered their progress.

After about two months of sheltering in place under government order, I'm contemplating making the break. What if I no longer colored my hair? What if I gave up on the formula my stylist perfected, over years, to achieve my honey-wheat-blond base with ribbons of "natural" highlights?

Against the backdrop of life-and-death decisions made during this coronavirus pandemic, my question must seem trivial. But for me, it's a meaningful, potentially pivotal call.

Like many women, I've fought with my hair most of my life. I ironed out the frizz during my awkward teenage years and attempted to tame my curls as a young staffer on Capitol Hill. I began to color and keratin my hair as I made my career in corporate America. As some of my features began to shift and sag with age, my beautifully coiffed blond bob became my prized, signature feature.

I don't know who wrote the rules of women's hair, but I've obeyed them. For women in big corporations—and I've worked in three: American Express, Estée Lauder and Pfizer—there are two rarely broken codes: every woman has a silky straight blowout, and hardly anyone is gray.

This is not the first time I've flirted with the idea of letting go of the coloring. The driver is not so much the considerable hours and expense involved in maintaining my hair as the desire to confidently embrace my age and life experience. To rock it, rather than hide it.

"No! Not yet," my mom shrieks each time. Why, as a woman near 60, I still inquire or care about what my mother thinks is a subject for another day. My mom, in her 80s, has jet black hair. Now, during family Zoom calls, she wears a baseball cap.

My new wild hair could signify that I, too, have emerged from this devastating time transformed

TODAY, MY RELATIONSHIP with the gray orb atop my head is different. I'm not worrying about fashion or social norms. Maybe going gray is a symbol—a demarcation of my life before and after. My new appearance forged in the sorrow and pain of the pandemic. A daily reminder of my 91-year-old mother-in-law's struggle to survive in a senior center rampant with the disease, of my young adult daughter's forced return home from graduate school when her university shuttered, and of my cousin's anguish at having to close the restaurants he spent his life building. The silver streaks on my head keeping these losses top of mind, literally.

My new wild hair would make the pandemic's mark permanent. It could signify that I, too, have emerged from this devastating time transformed. Going forward, I'll no longer be a woman of trivial pursuits.

My silver mane will stand for courage and strength. Many women I admire have made the leap: the bold and brilliant European Central Bank president Christine Lagarde and the competent and no-nonsense former U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, to name a few.

Surely, I'm among the most fortunate. I'm safely sheltered and have purposeful work. Each night when I sit down to a home-cooked meal with my wife and daughter, I raise my glass and say the same toast: "To another day healthy and together."

I still have a way to go on this journey of heart and hair. Will I see this change through or run to the beauty shop the minute this virus is in the rearview mirror? Will I have brilliant white locks or a head of dishwater gray hair? Will my vanity triumph in the end?

At present, there's a stubborn dark patch that sits just above my forehead, fighting back against this tide. Still, gray wisps persist along my hairline and feather out from my temples. Maybe they are wings.

Susman is the executive vice president and chief corporate affairs officer of Pfizer

The road to recovery: how targeted lockdowns can help improve the U.S. reopening

By Daron Acemoglu, Victor Chernozhukov, Iván Werning and Michael Whinston

With no end in sight to the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. seems to be faced with an unappealing choice: If we prioritize saving lives, we court economic ruin. If we opt for economic recovery, we lose friends, colleagues and loved ones. The available options need not be so grim. With the right policy decisions, and well-coordinated action to implement them, America's possibilities can improve substantially.

In a recently released National Bureau of Economic Research paper, we report on our research focusing on one strategy that can yield large gains: targeting lockdowns based on health risks—specifically, age. As is well documented, the mortality risk from COVID-19 is highly correlated to age. Because those over 65 years of age have around 60 times the mortality rate of those ages 20 to 49, lockdowns on the elderly as a protective measure can be very effective in reducing deaths. They also have lower economic costs than lockdowns for younger adults, as only around 20% of those over 65 are still working.

The choice between protecting lives and economic recovery is complex and difficult—not least because politicians and the public alike disagree on the trade-off between excess deaths from the pandemic and the economic damages. But our study shows, no matter what the priorities are, targeted policies bring both public-health and economic benefits.

Three key conclusions follow from our study:

FIRST, simply "opening up" is a bad policy. Even if we cared only about purely economic costs, ending all lockdowns would lead to deaths in the millions. Because illnesses and deaths have economic costs (for example, workers who die are no longer able to work), a no-lockdown policy that overwhelms our health care system would result in higher economic losses than policies that involve lockdowns.

SECOND, there can be dramatic gains from a targeted policy that continues to protect the elderly but gradually eases lockdowns on those under 65. Lockdowns for the elderly not only help shelter them from the pandemic but also allow for a much quicker easing of restrictions for those under 65. This does not mean that lockdowns should be ended right away on those under 65. Doing so could lead to a renewed spike in infections and an overwhelmed health care system. Infections among the young would also spill over to the elderly, who can never be perfectly segregated from the rest of the population.

In these circumstances, an optimal lockdown policy should ease restrictions on the young gradually over a number of months. This easing might sensibly take into account factors such as the importance of the sector a person works in, the risks their work poses for infection, an individual's comorbidities and the ICU capacity in local hospitals.

For example, while an untargeted lockdown applied regardless of age could keep the mortality rate among the adult population to 0.2%, achieving even this mortality rate would have significant economic costs, equivalent to over 35% of one year's GDP. (These costs include both the current decline in GDP and the loss of the future contributions of those who die.) Simple targeting measures that protect the more vulnerable and older individuals can reduce these economic losses by more than 10% of a year's GDP without causing any further loss of life. Or policymakers can settle for the same economic loss and reduce mortality, saving lives.

THIRD, and importantly, we can do even better by adopting complementary policies, such as increased testing to identify the infected quickly and isolate them, and other social-distancing actions (reducing large social gatherings, wearing face masks, curtailing contact between the elderly and younger people, etc.). Combined with targeted lockdowns protecting the elderly as well as similar measures applied to younger individuals with comorbidities, these strategies can dramatically improve the outcomes our country can achieve. With these additional measures in place, optimal lockdowns for younger and healthier groups can be much more limited and possibly even eliminated entirely, and society can benefit by reducing both deaths and economic damages.

Sadly, testing capacity in the U.S. is still grossly inadequate. According to the COVID Tracking Project, the U.S. is currently conducting slightly more than 300,000 tests per day—that is, about one-tenth of 1% of the U.S. adult population per day. Contact tracing is woefully inadequate in most states. Without a massive surge in testing and

4.8%

The first-quarter drop in GDP to the U.S. as the coronavirus spread

14.7%

Unemployment rate in April

16%

Percentage of the U.S. population who are senior citizens

People sit in marked circles to promote social distancing in Brooklyn on May 15, as cities across America adopt new policies to reopen

HILARY SWIFT—THE NEW YORK TIMES/REDUX

tracing, targeted lockdowns and social-distancing practices can greatly improve outcomes for the U.S., but the possibility for even more dramatic results in terms of lives and economic livelihoods will be squandered.

IMPLEMENTING ANY OF THESE POLICIES IS A CHALLENGING task. Targeted protections for the elderly need to cover roughly 50 million people over the age of 65. Approximately 10% of these individuals live with their adult children, 4% are in nursing homes and other residential care facilities, and the rest live on their own or with elderly partners. Careful planning needs to go into how to protect them and whether their isolation should come through an enforced lockdown or a voluntary, strongly recommended guideline.

For those in nursing homes, it is vital to limit outsider visits and make sure that the staff is infection-free. The latter can be helped by regular testing of nursing-home employees and proper hygiene and mask-wearing protocols. It may also need the redeployment of nurses and aides who have already recovered and are immune (though we need more data on how long immunity lasts and how extensive it is) or who agree to be isolated themselves.

For the roughly 86% of the elderly who live on their own or with other seniors, we need to find ways to support their continued isolation. One possibility would be to use some of the COVID-19 federal relief packages to launch and fund an Elder Care Corps that would provide for the elderly a few hours per week of support, such as doing shopping, handling deliveries and providing home-care services. Like nursing-home employees, members of this corps would need to be either immune, be regularly tested or undergo isolation themselves.

The corps could be made up of volunteers, those needing jobs, or the National Guard and military, and could be organized either through the government or by organizations like the Red Cross. For example, many of the roughly 1.9 million graduating college seniors are in need of employment and might welcome the possibility of living together with fellow corps members in isolation from others. Mobilizing these graduates to be “seniors helping seniors” would cost less than $1 billion (if we pay $30,000 a year to 30,000 of them) and would have the added benefit of providing jobs and a social purpose to this young generation during our hour of need. Other options include fostering private-sector solutions for ensuring virus-free deliveries of food, medicine and other essential supplies.

We must also pay attention to the mental-health implications of lockdowns. Gradual easing of lockdowns for those below 65 will go some way toward limiting the adverse consequences of social isolation for younger age groups. For the elderly, we have to find ways of managing social isolation while maintaining their physical isolation. Technology to communicate with loved ones and better organized social gatherings for the elderly can help.

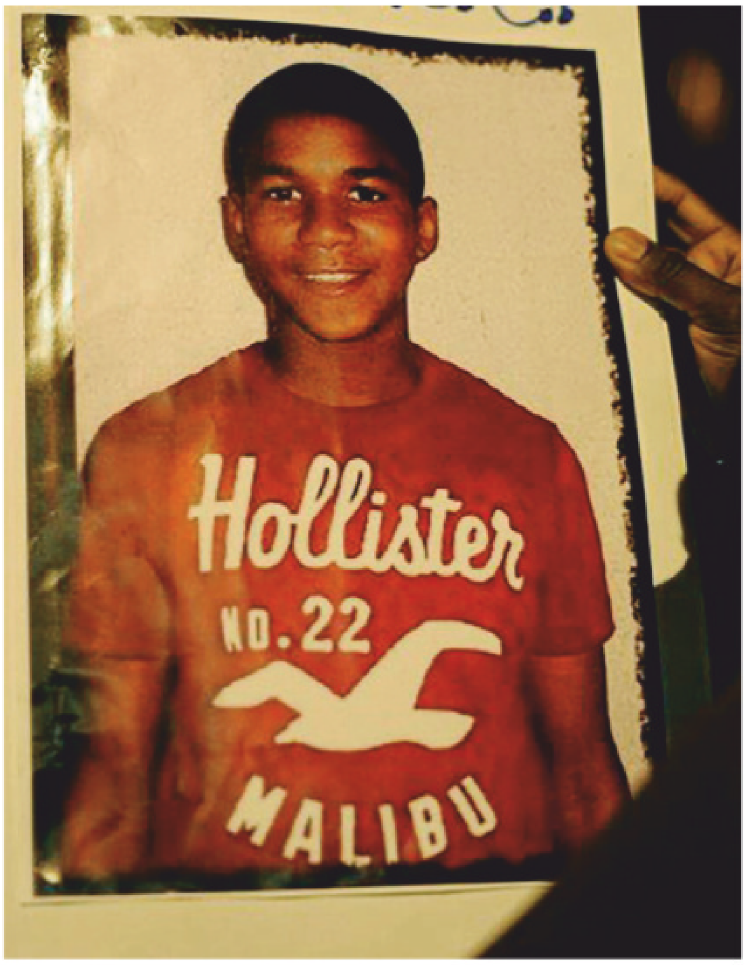
The dichotomy between saving the economy and saving lives is a false one. Making lockdowns age-specific is an important pillar for an improved public policy. Our research shows that when combined with better social distancing between age groups and a ramp-up of testing and tracing, targeted lockdowns can minimize economic damage and save lives.

Acemoglu, Chernozhukov, Werning and Whinston are professors of economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Sloan School of Management; they are the co-authors of a study published by the National Bureau of Economic Research on optimally targeted lockdowns

VIEWPOINT

The double injustice of unreasonable fear

By David French



IF YOU CLOSELY FOLLOW THE TWISTS AND TURNS IN MANY of the most recent high-profile shootings of black men, you'll notice a pattern. First, only the slightest and smallest level of alleged misconduct or "suspicious" behavior is used to justify the killer's unreasonable fear.

And second, even after the smoke clears, all too many members of the public will understand, forgive and perhaps even share that deadly terror. Americans still impose upon black men the burden of their own unbalanced sense of risk. The injustice of the singular act of the shooting is magnified by a collective acceptance and defense of the shooter's extraordinary alarm.

The pattern applies to the shooting of Ahmaud Arbery. The known facts of the case are simple and startling. On the afternoon of Feb. 23, two Georgia men, Travis and Gregory McMichael, saw Arbery running past their home. According to the police report in the case, these men thought he looked like a suspect in recent break-ins, so they armed themselves with a shotgun and a handgun and—along with a third man—gave chase in two vehicles.

Eventually they cornered Arbery. One vehicle drove behind him, its driver filming the encounter. The McMichaels' parked truck was in front of him, blocking his path forward. When he tried to run around the truck, Travis McMichael moved to intercept, holding his shotgun. Arbery and Travis scuffled, and the Georgia bureau of investigation said Travis shot Arbery, killing him.

The video was shocking. Why would these men arm themselves and chase down a young man in shorts and a T-shirt who held no visible weapons? Gregory McMichael told police they thought he might be armed. Why? Because they'd seen him once put his hand down his pants.

That is the very definition of unreasonable fear.

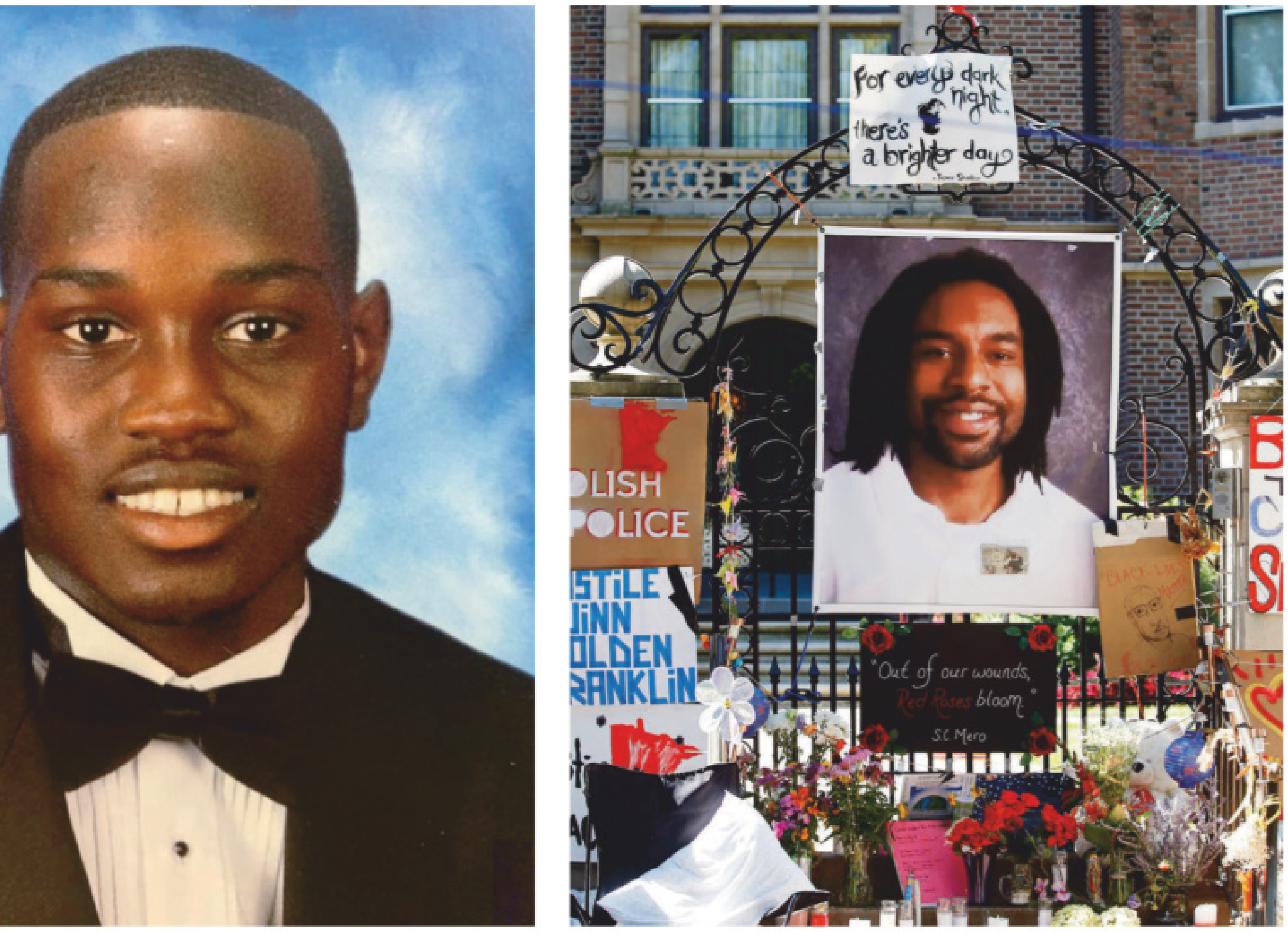
AS THE CASE gained widespread public attention, evidence emerged that Arbery had likely been in a construction site shortly before he was shot. A 911 caller said he saw a man in an open, unfinished house. A video feed showed someone who looked like Arbery standing in the site. There was no immediate evidence that he committed a crime. He simply stood in an empty, open building—something countless curious Americans do as a matter of course.

Yet that very allegation, as innocuous as it is, was enough for some conservatives to come to the McMichaels' defense. For example, conservative commentator Tomi Lahren compared the claim that Arbery was "just out jogging" to the false claim that Michael Brown had his hands up when he was fatally shot in Ferguson, Mo.

There are Americans who would never pick up a weapon and try to track down a black man running on the street, but they understand and sympathize with those who do

Another conservative commentator, Candace Owens, attacked the claim that Arbery was "just a jogger" and said he was "caught on camera breaking into an unfinished property." But even if true, that action in no way justifies an armed two-car pursuit, and it certainly doesn't permit private citizens to attempt to seize Arbery at gunpoint. That's not the only trivial action or suspicion that contributed to a deadly attack. I'll never forget the extraordinary statement of Jeronimo Yanez, the officer who shot and killed a young black man named Philando Castile during a traffic stop after Castile told Yanez that he was lawfully carrying a firearm. It's hardly unusual for a motorist to lawfully carry a firearm, and video of the encounter shows that Castile was complying with Yanez's instructions when he was shot. That same video shows Yanez rapidly escalating the encounter. What was one reason Yanez became so instantly afraid? Why was he so immediately convinced that a calmly speaking Castile was a deadly threat?

Because Yanez smelled marijuana. Yanez told investigators that if Castile "has the, the guts and the audacity to smoke marijuana in front of the 5-year-old girl and risk her lungs and risk her life by giving her secondhand smoke and the front-seat passenger doing the same thing then what, what care does he give about me?" And lest anyone believe that Yanez's statement


For every dark night, there's a brighter day
LISH
POLICE
CASTILE
JINN
OLDEN
RANKLIN
"Out of our wounds, Red Roses bloom"
SC Mero

From left: a poster image of Trayvon Martin; a photo of Ahmaud Arbery; a memorial for Philando Castile

MARTIN: BRIAN BLANCO—EPA/SHUTTERSTOCK; ARBERY: COURTESY MARCUS ARBERY/REUTERS; CASTILE: JIM MONE—AP

was too unreasonable to truly believe, recall that a Minnesota jury acquitted him of second-degree manslaughter charges.

THERE ARE JUST too many tragic examples. Do you remember the killing of Walter Scott? He was shot in the back in 2015 by a South Carolina police officer named Michael Slager as Scott fled from a scuffle. He was unarmed. Why did the officer shoot an unarmed black man in the back? "I was scared," Slager told the jury. He said that in his mind was "total fear." A 33-year-old cop was terrified of a 50-year-old man running away.

One of the most traumatic fatal confrontations in recent U.S. history—the killing of Trayvon Martin—began when George Zimmerman called 911 to report that Martin "looks like he's up to no good. Or he's on drugs or something. It's raining and he's just walking around, looking about."

That was the sight that led an armed man to follow a teenager. There were no weapons visible (Martin was unarmed). There was no evidence of any criminality.

When the case dominated public attention, a number of right-wing sites combed through Martin's history, publicized evidence of past drug use and speculated whether he was a drug dealer. They were looking for reasons to justify Zimmerman's pursuit. As Shermichael Singleton recalls in the Washington *Post,* Geraldo Rivera went so far as to identify Martin's hoodie as a material factor in his death. "If he didn't have that hoodie on," Rivera argued, "that nutty neighborhood watch guy wouldn't have responded in that violent and aggressive way."

The legal outcomes of these cases vary. A hung jury protected Slager before he pleaded guilty to a federal civil rights offense. Juries acquitted Yanez and Zimmerman. And the Arbery murder case is pending, the McMichaels having been arrested in May. Juries acquitted Yanez and Zimmerman. But each case was dominated by obvious, outsize perceptions of threat and danger.

And, rather than rightly being seen as a badge of shame, the shooters' paranoia actually unites their defenders in righteous indignation.

How can this be? In part because a part of the U.S. population shares the same perceptions of threat as the shooters themselves. They look at the McMichaels and sympathize with their armed pursuit. They think it was just fine for Zimmerman to follow Martin. And if police officers felt afraid, who are they to second-guess the boys in blue?

Put another way, there are Americans who would never pick up a weapon and try to track down a black man running on the street—or follow a young black man on a rainy night—but they understand and sympathize with those who do.

There is no easy cure for an unbalanced sense of risk. One can flood the zone with statistics about reduced crime. Juries can hold cowardly killers accountable. Outrageous video clips can raise awareness and slowly open eyes. But—at the end of the day—the battle is over the state of the human heart.

Make no mistake. Hearts can change. There was a time when my own first instinct was to disbelieve that injustice and prejudice could still be so profound. Surely, I would think, there was a "rest of the story." And yes, sometimes there was. Sometimes, initial reports of police or citizen misconduct were wrong.

But all too often those reports of misconduct were right. All too often they are right. In fact, those reports are right so often—with so many Americans defending the indefensible—that I realized that all too many of these cases carried with them a dreadful double injustice. There was the awful death itself. Then there was the public declaration that there was something right about the alarm and even terror that triggered deadly violence.

It's that second injustice that helps perpetuate the cycle of violence. It teaches a new American generation that when black men do even small things, then there is a reason to grab a gun—and even to fire that gun. The battle for hearts and minds must continue. It must be relentless and urgent—until at long last there is no real market for rationalization. After all, there is no reason a walk through a neighborhood at night or through an open construction site, or a whiff of marijuana in a car, should create in any American that terrible and fatal sense of unreasonable fear.

French is a TIME columnist

UNLUCKY GRADUATES

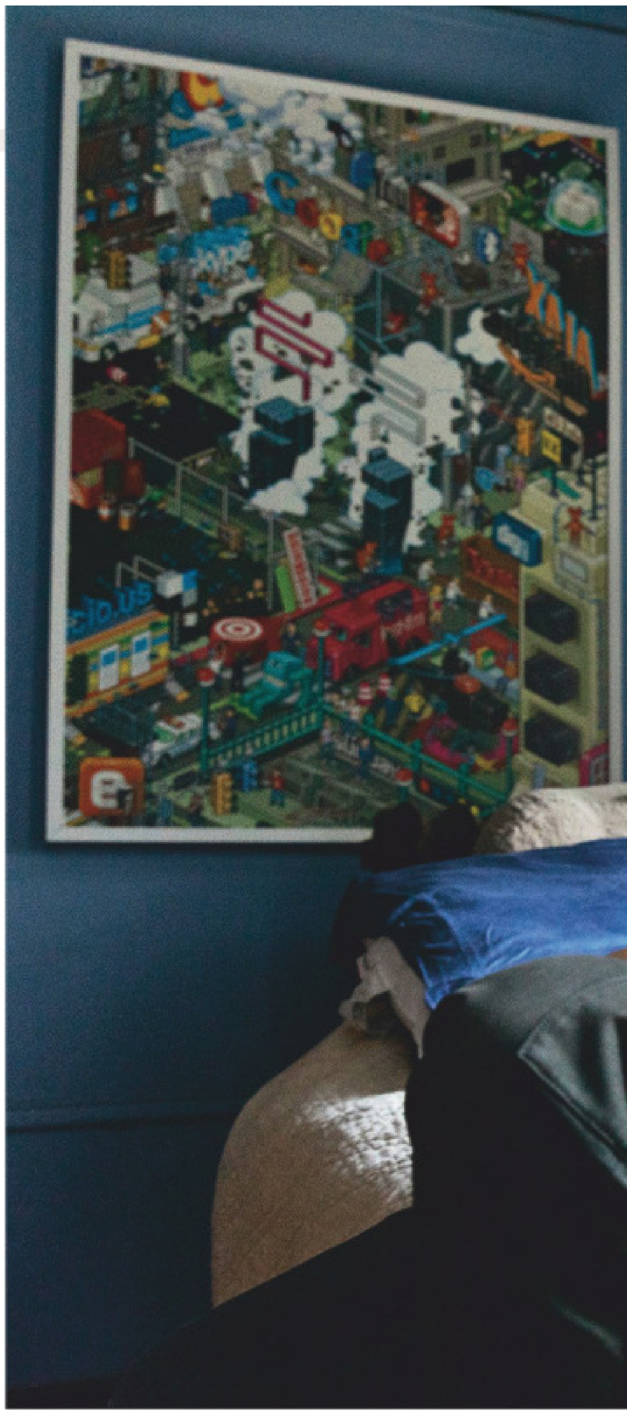
How COVID-19 will shape the Class of 2020

By Charlotte Alter

PHOTOGRAPHS BY HANNAH BEIER

Beier, a photography major in the Drexel University Class of 2020, has been virtually photographing her classmates in quarantine. She directed this series of portraits over FaceTime.

Elissa DeFranceschi, 21, with her boyfriend in Philadelphia



Joshua McCaw, 22, in his childhood bedroom in Brooklyn

THEY CALL IT COMMENCEMENT BECAUSE IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE A NEW BEGINNING.

College graduation is one of life's last clean transitions, a final passage from adolescence to adulthood that is predictable in ways other transitions rarely are. Relationships end with breakups or death, jobs often end with quitting or firing, but college is one of the only things in life that ends with a fresh start. Except when it doesn't.

One morning in March, Clavey Robertson took a study break and climbed onto the roof of his dorm at the University of California, Berkeley. He had spent the past year working on his senior thesis on the erosion of the social-safety net since the Great Depression, and he needed to clear his head. In the distance, Robertson could see a tiny white speck: the *Diamond Princess* cruise ship, carrying crew members infected with COVID-19, lingering in the San Francisco Bay.

Two months later, Robertson's transition to adulthood is in limbo. He skipped his online commencement and he's living in his childhood bedroom, which had been converted to a guest room. His parents have lost their travel agency work, and his own job prospects have dried up. "No longer am I just a student writing about the Great Depression," he says. "Now there's a depression."

College graduation is often marked by an adjustment period, as students leave the comforts of campus to find their way in the raw wilderness of the job market. But this year's graduates are staggering into a world that is in some ways unrecognizable. More than 90,000 Americans have died; tens of millions are out of work; entire industries have crumbled. The virus and the economic shock waves it unleashed have hammered Americans of all ages. But graduating in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic will have enduring implications on the Class of 2020: for their memories, their earning power, and their view of what it means to have a functional society. For these young adults, the pandemic represents not just a national crisis but also a defining moment.

Even before COVID-19, the Class of 2020 came of age at a time of fear and uncertainty. Born largely in 1997 and 1998—among the oldest of Gen Z—the Class of 2020 were in day care and pre-kindergarten on 9/11. Their childhoods have been punctuated by school

shootings and catastrophic climate change. Their freshman year at college began with President Donald Trump’s election; their senior year ended with a paralyzing global health crisis. “We stepped into the world as it was starting to fall apart,” says Simone Williams, who graduated from Florida A&M University in an online commencement May 9. “It’s caused my generation to have a vastly different perspective than the people just a few years ahead of us or behind us.”

> **‘We stepped into the world as it was starting to fall apart.’**
>
> **—SIMONE WILLIAMS, FLORIDA A&M UNIVERSITY**

Researchers have found that the major events voters experience in early adulthood—roughly between the ages of 14 and 24—tend to define their political attitudes for the rest of their lives. And the Class of 2020’s generation was already disaffected. Only 8% of Americans between 18 and 29 believe the government is working as it should be, and fewer than 1 in 5 consider themselves “very patriotic,” according to the 2020 Harvard Kennedy School Institute of Politics survey of young Americans. They are at once widely skeptical of U.S. institutions and insistent on more government solutions; they’re disappointed in the current system, but hold out hope for a better one.

For the Class of 2020, COVID-19’s lasting impact may be determined by what happens next. If the rising cohort of young workers are left to fend for themselves, mass youth unemployment could lead to permanent disillusionment or widespread despair. A forceful, effective response that invests in the rising generation of American talent could restore their faith in the system.

It’s not clear to the Class of 2020 how the pandemic will play out. They just know it will change their lives. “Everything” is at stake, says Yale history major Adrian Rivera. “It’s this pivotal moment where we’ll never forget what’s done,” he says. “Or what isn’t done.”

SCHOOL IS OFTEN A REFUGE FROM the gusts of history. But the events that rupture the classroom routine, from President Kennedy’s assassination to 9/11, tend to be the ones that stick with students forever.

The coronavirus disrupted more class time, for more students, than almost any other event in U.S. history. It started with a scramble: The University of Washington announced on March 6 that it was canceling in-person classes for its 57,000 students. Then Stanford University followed suit. Over the next few days, campuses from Harvard to the University of Michigan announced they’d be transitioning to online learning. Soon, hundreds of other colleges and universities followed.

By Friday, March 13, an eerie silence fell on campuses across the nation. “Something about that day was really weird, because every time my friends and I would say ‘See you later’ or ‘Catch you after break,’ I just had this sinking feeling that I wasn’t going to see them,” says Vincent Valeriano, a member of Iowa State University’s Class of 2020. “Saying goodbye felt like it carried a lot more weight than it used to.” He ended up watching his online graduation ceremony at home, in his pajamas.

For underclassmen, the shortened semester was an irritating disruption. For seniors, it was a total upheaval. "There's no way for there to be closure," says Sam Nelson, who recently graduated with a journalism degree from the University of Missouri. "I know in real life, closure doesn't exist, but this is one of the last moments for young people to say goodbye to young adulthood and move into the next phase of their lives."

The Class of 2020 hugged their closest friends and mourned their lost semester, but scattered back home without so much as a goodbye to many people they'd lived with for years. Acquaintances who laughed in hallways or shared inside jokes in seminars simply disappeared. Fraternities and sororities canceled their formals and philanthropy events, attempting Zoom happy hours that didn't come close to the real thing. For some couples, casual hookups quickly escalated into long-distance relationships. Others quietly packed up their feelings for college crushes and left without saying a word.

The loss of a milestone like an in-person commencement had a special sting for some families. Arianny Pujols, the first natural-born U.S. citizen in her family and the first to graduate from college, still did her hair and makeup as if she were walking across the stage at Missouri State University. She and her family held a small ceremony in her grandfather's backyard, and then she stood on the sidewalk in her cap and gown waving at cars with a sign that said "Honk, I did it!" Brenda Sanchez, 22, whose parents are immigrants from Mexico, says they will miss both her graduation from Humboldt State University in California and her sister's college graduation the next day. "My parents didn't go to school. They didn't graduate," says Sanchez, who is herself an immigrant and is protected from deportation by President Obama's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals policy. "Your heart breaks a little. You did work hard, you did earn this degree, but you're not going to see yourself walk across that stage."

Instead of graduating into their future lives, many Class of 2020 seniors feel like they've gone backward. "We were ready to be in the world as young adults—not good adults, maybe clumsy adults, but some kind of adult," says Ilana Goldberg, who recently graduated from Tufts University in an online ceremony. "We're not in the system anymore, but we're not far enough out of it to have our footing in the world."

Eric Kolarik, who was supposed to be sitting at his University of Michigan commencement ceremony in early May, is instead back home in Traverse City, Mich., raking leaves, helping his mom with the dishes, doing the same chores he did in high school. "I'm 22 but I've assumed the life of 15-year-old Eric again," he says. "You feel like a failure to launch."

'You feel like a failure to launch.'

—ERIC KOLARIK, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Sarah Pruitt, 21,
at home with her mom
in Colchester, Conn.

IF ONLY THEY KNEW THAT A STOLEN senior spring is the least of their problems. The Class of 2020 is falling through a massive hole in the U.S. social-safety net, into a financial downturn that could define their lives for decades to come.

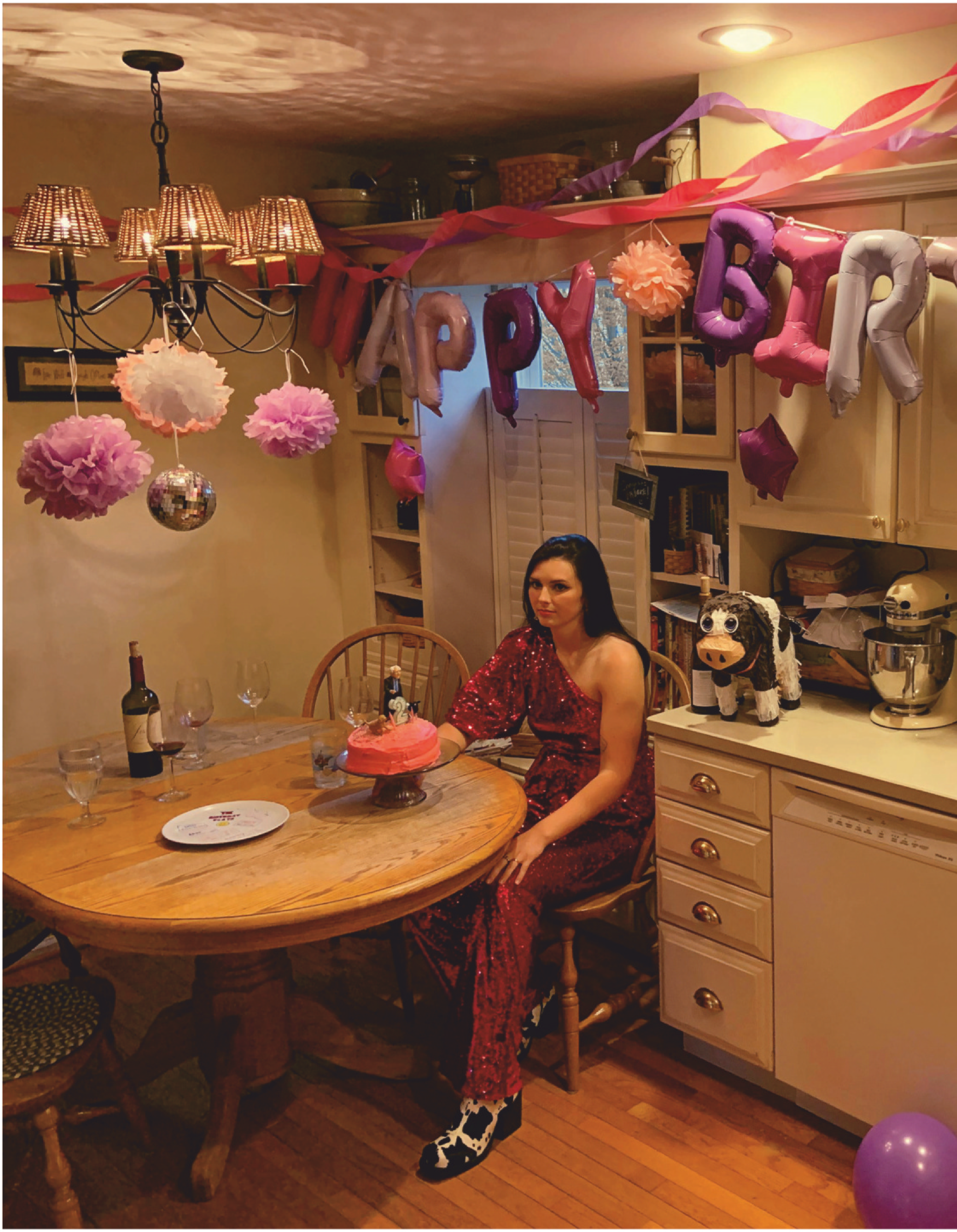
Graduating seniors have lost on-campus jobs that got them through school. Many haven't been working for long enough to qualify for full unemployment. If they've been listed as dependents on their parents' taxes, they don't get a stimulus check. They haven't had time to build up significant savings.

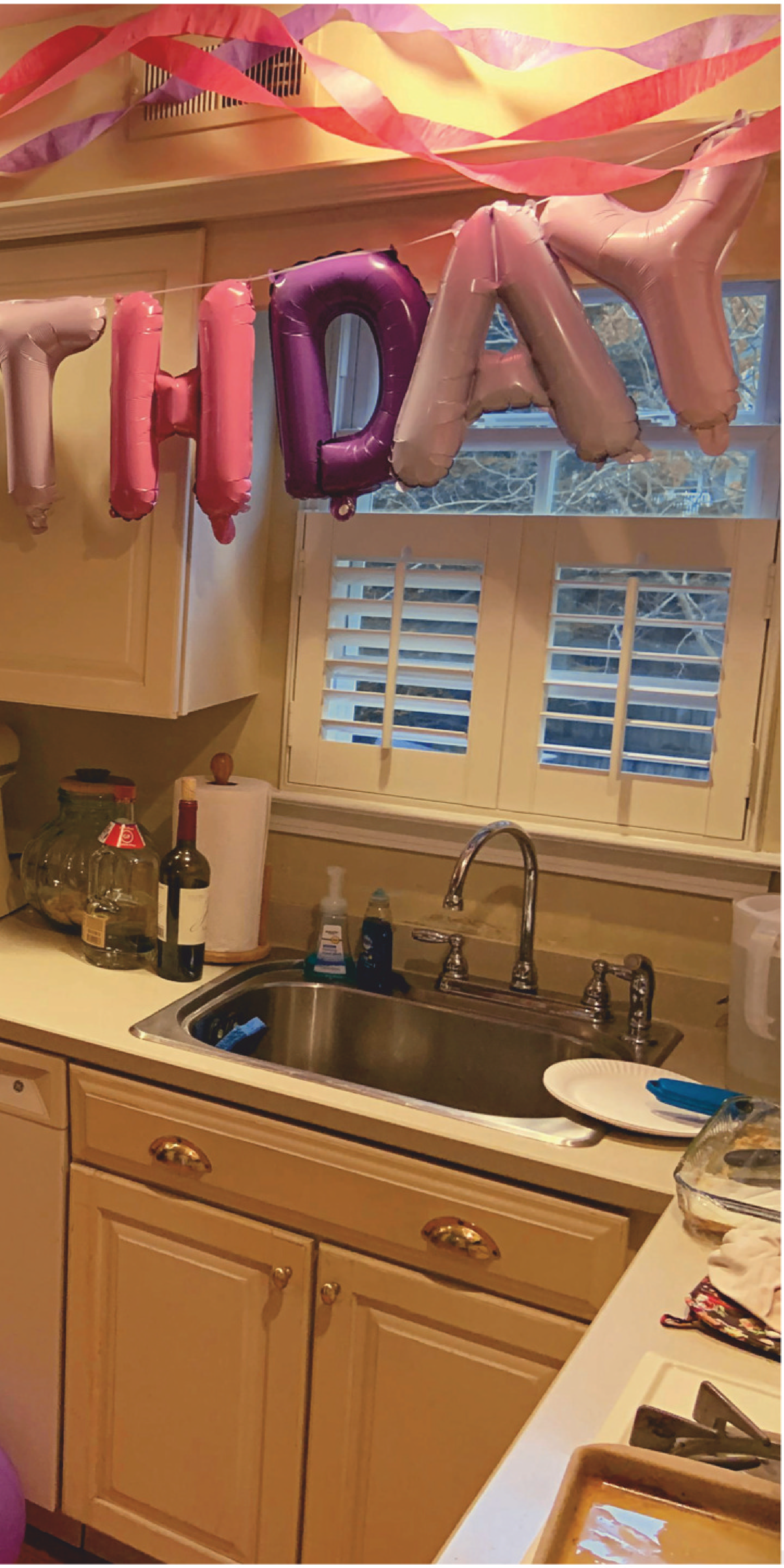
"I'm not sure they've fully processed what 25% unemployment, disproportionately affecting younger Americans, will actually mean," says John Della Volpe, director of polling at Harvard's Institute of Politics. He recalls that during the last recession, the Class of 2009 scrambled to scoop up opportunities, "like a game of musical chairs." The Class of 2020, by contrast, is essentially frozen in place by a pandemic that has trapped much of the nation inside their homes. "There almost are no opportunities in any sector," Della Volpe says. "It's like suspended animation."

More than 1 in 5 employers surveyed by the National Association of Colleges and Employers in April said they were rescinding their summer internship offers. The overall number of postings on the online jobs platform ZipRecruiter have fallen by nearly half since mid-February, while new postings for entry-level positions have plummeted more than 75%, according to ZipRecruiter labor economist Julia Pollak. A year ago, less experienced job seekers were enjoying brisk wage growth and rosy job prospects. Now, Pollak says, "it's particularly hard for new graduates.

Sanchez, who worked two jobs and started her own eyelash-extension business to help pay for school, has applied for more than 70 jobs in recent weeks without success. Williams, who dreams of working in the entertainment industry, had no luck with at least 15 jobs and struck out with fellowships that are no longer taking applicants; now she's cobbling together gig work. Robertson had planned to try to get a job in labor activism; these days, he's considering graduate school instead.

It's not just dream jobs that have disappeared. Historically, many young people take positions in the retail or restaurant industries as they find their path. According to Pew, of the roughly 19 million 16-to-24-year-olds in the labor force, more than 9 million were employed in the service sector. Suddenly, a significant chunk of those jobs have evaporated. In April alone, the leisure and hospitality industry lost 47% of its total workforce, with 7.7 million workers newly unemployed, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Which means the economic crisis has hit the youngest harder than any other age group. More than half of Americans under 30 say someone in their household has lost a job or taken a pay cut because of the coronavirus crisis, according to Pew, and


HAPPY BIR



Brooke Yarsinsky, 22, celebrating her birthday in her family's kitchen in Marlton, N.J.

Ben Scofield, 22, on his bed in his new apartment in the Bushwick neighborhood of Brooklyn

the youngest workers are more likely than older generations to say that the pandemic has hurt their finances more than other people.

Graduating into a bad economy can affect everything from future earnings to long-term health and happiness. Researchers have found that beginning a career in the teeth of a recession can depress earnings for 10 years, and trigger broader impacts for decades. One study from UCLA and Northwestern found that the young people who came of age during the early 1980s recession had higher mortality, and were more likely to get divorced, and less likely to have children. Till von Wachter, a UCLA labor economist who has spent years studying this issue, has a name for these young people who enter the labor force at the worst possible moment: "unlucky graduates."

Rather than brave a job market battered by COVID-19, some in the Class of 2020 are seeking refuge in graduate school. But that presents its own conundrum. As of 2019, nearly 7 in 10 college students graduated with student loans, with an average tab of nearly $30,000. Going to graduate school can mean taking on even more debt. "I'm having

'We were ready to be in the world as young adults—maybe clumsy adults, but some kind of adult.'

—ILANA GOLDBERG, TUFTS UNIVERSITY

Jillian Yagoda, 21, with her boyfriend Benjamin Halperin in the apartment the University of Maryland grads share in College Park, Md.

to take out grad loans, but I can't work to pay them off," says Sean Lange, who plans to enroll in a master's program in public policy after graduating from New York's Stony Brook University in an online ceremony in May. He's not even sure he'll get his money's worth for the $18,000 annual tuition. Especially if his classes end up being taught online.

ALL OF THIS—THE FORGONE MEMories, the abrupt goodbyes, the lost opportunities—will stay with the Class of 2020 forever. "The coronavirus pandemic is the biggest cultural event since World War II," says Jean Twenge, a psychologist and author of *iGen,* who studies millennials and Gen Z. "It's going to have a huge impact on everyone, but young adults in particular."

Even before COVID-19, much of Gen Z was disappointed in the government response to the issues facing their generation. These are the students who joined the March for Our Lives gun-safety movement amid near weekly school shootings, and went on strike over inaction on climate change. They were too young to be swept up in Barack Obama's 2008 campaign, but old enough to gravitate toward Bernie Sanders' message of progressive revolution in the 2016 primary. Those who were old enough to vote overwhelmingly opposed President Trump in that year's general election. They favor student debt reform and universal health care. They are the most racially diverse generation in U.S. history.

Their skepticism of public institutions is largely fueled by a sense that the government is doing too little, not too much. A study last year by Pew Research Center found that 7 in 10 wanted the government to "do more to solve problems." The divide is generational, not political: more than half of Gen Z Republicans say they want the government to do more. (Less than a third of older Republicans agree.)

Near mandatory use of social media has already contributed to sky-high levels of depression and anxiety among Gen Z, according to Twenge. She analyzed data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health and found that the number of young adults reporting symptoms of major depression had increased 63% between 2009 and 2017, with a marked turning point around 2012, when smartphone use first became widespread. The pandemic has likely only made them more anxious and disillusioned. Pew found that Americans between 18 and 29 are more likely than older ones to feel depressed during the pandemic, and less hopeful about the future than the senior citizens who are far more vulnerable to the disease caused by the virus.

Which helps explain why young activists view this as a now-or-never moment for their cohort. They know that the pandemic will shape their futures, even if it's not yet clear exactly how. "Either we will end up with a generation that is far more resilient than earlier generations," says Varshini Prakash, a leader of the Gen Z–powered Sunrise Movement, "or it could be a generation that is far more nihilistic, and far less likely to engage in our politics because they've seen the institutions fail them at the times they really needed it." The youngest cohort of Americans "could be traumatized for life," says Robert Reich, a former U.S. Labor Secretary who is now a professor of public policy at University of California, Berkeley. "They could turn economically and socially inward. They could lose faith in all institutions, and they are trending in that direction anyway."

In other countries, like Egypt, Tunisia and Spain, widespread unemployment among educated young people has led to social unrest or radicalization, mostly because of a sense of betrayal. They think, "we thought there was some kind of bargain, a social contract, that if we play by the rules we get a job at the end of all of this," says Heath Prince, a research scientist at University of Texas at Austin. So far youth unemployment in the U.S. is mostly correlated with drug addiction and right-wing extremism, Prince says, and hasn't tipped into the realm of mass uprisings. Then again, unemployment hasn't been this high in nearly 80 years.

"My generation isn't feeling like they're being spoken to or listened to, and at the same time, a lot of us are becoming economically disenfranchised," says Robertson, the University of California, Berkeley, graduate who studied the New Deal. "I definitely think a lot of us have lost confidence in the government."

The only way to address an unemployment rate reminiscent of the 1930s, according to some scholars, students and activists, is a federal government response that echoes the scale of 1930s reforms. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal included major initiatives to get young Americans back to work. Six days after he took office in 1933, Roosevelt proposed the Civilian Conservation Corps: within four months, the federal government had hired 300,000 young men to plant trees and maintain parks and trails. Three million young people were ultimately employed as part of the program. In 1935, Roosevelt created the National Youth Administration (NYA) as part of the Works Progress Administration, designed to give young Americans work-study and job training. (A young Lyndon B. Johnson got an early political break as an administrator of the NYA program in Texas.) The Americans employed by these New Deal programs grew into the selfless, patriotic army that fought World War II, now known as the "Greatest Generation."

Some Democrats say the COVID-19 pandemic calls for a similar approach. Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts has called for a "Coronavirus Containment Corps," to expand the public-health workforce and employ an army of contact-tracers to help fight the spread of the virus. (Warren, an admirer of the New Deal, noted the CCC acronym is

'I have no faith in *this* Administration and *this* government. But I believe in Big Government.'

—SEAN LANGE, STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY

Kathryn Murashige, 24, in the sunroom of her childhood home in Kennett Square, Pa.

no coincidence.) Senator Chris Coons (D., Del.) joined with Senator Bill Cassidy (R., La.) to champion a national service bill that would expand Americorps and fund 750,000 jobs to help train new health care workers to fight COVID-19. And proponents of a Green New Deal, like Prakash and Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York, are working to shape the environmental policy of presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden.

Given Republicans' skepticism of big government programs, none of these ideas are likely to make it through Mitch McConnell's Senate or onto President Trump's desk. But the political landscape has already shifted the universe of the possible, with Republicans agreeing to recovery measures—such as sending $1,200 stimulus checks to eligible working Americans—that would have been unthinkable only months ago. And if Democrats reclaim the Senate and the White House, broader reform could be closer than it looks. Young people who are skeptical of government's ability to solve big problems say their faith can be restored. "I have no faith in *this* Administration and *this* government," explains Lange, the Stony Brook public-policy student. "But I believe in Big Government."

Eric Kolarik spent his last semester at the University of Michigan working on a paper about the 1918 flu pandemic. Now, with classes canceled and his job search on ice, his copy of *The Great Influenza* is on his childhood bookshelf, alongside his old high school copies of *The Crucible* and *Of Mice and Men*. "There will be a sort of unity that the Class of 2020 has with each other, and it's not fond memories," he says. "People will say, 'You're the Class of 2020,' and everyone will know what that meant."

The pandemic has marked the end of one phase for this unlucky cohort. The recovery could mark the beginning of another. □

MOST LIK

Clockwise from top left: Kamryn Sneed, Addison Bilodeau, Louis Maes, Megan Lee, Lorraie Forbes, Lauren Ulrich, Dhruv Krishna and María Victoria Cárdenas Guerra

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PARI DUKOVIC FOR TIME

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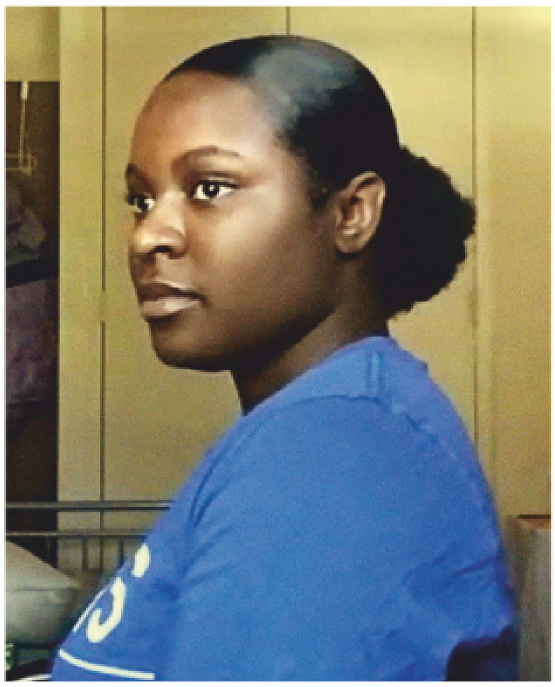


... have a Zoom graduation party, star in a viral TikTok, lose a summer job, completely rethink plans for the future. Eight high school seniors around the world on what it's like to come of age in 2020

Dhruv started a fundraising nonprofit after his twin brother died of cancer in 2018 but has struggled to keep it afloat; he's pictured here at home, via Zoom

DHRUV KRISHNA

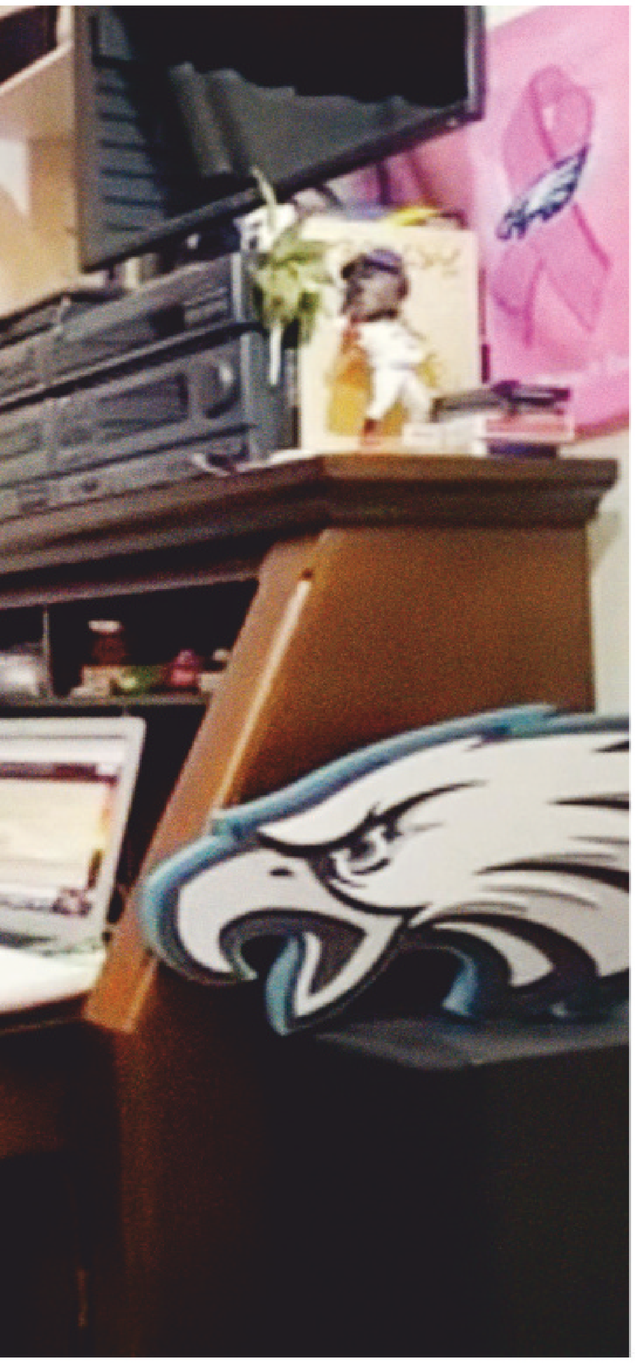
Dhruv, 17, lives in Allentown, Pa., and plans to attend the University of Virginia this fall

WE WERE ON SPRING BREAK when the corona hype hit the U.S. At first we were like, "Oh, this is cool, we get another couple days." But those days turned into months, and then it hit us we would never see each other in person as a group again. We've been working for seven semesters, and this was supposed to be the best one.

We just finished AP-exam week. To celebrate, me and my friends are probably going to go to the parking lot. I've also been trying to manage the Team Arnav Foundation, which is definitely a struggle at this point. I founded it for my twin brother, who passed away from osteosarcoma in 2018. I didn't want anyone else to have to go through that. We've raised about $60,000 to sponsor new [cancer] research so far. We had plans to do a charity run this spring. Of course, that can't happen anymore. As a small business, it's hard to keep going because the resources aren't there. But we're scheduling another run for when this is all over. This is a lifelong pursuit.

A silver lining has been reconnecting with so many old friends—elementary school friends, summer-camp friends—on Zoom calls. Everyone's craving connection. Our school does Netflix parties. The most recent one was *Ferris Bueller's Day Off.* We also FaceTime and stay up really late, like 4 or 5 a.m., just talking about stupid things. I wasn't big on video games before, but now we're doing ones we can all join in, like *Call of Duty.* My parents are very understanding because of the situation, but they're also urging me to get outside and not spend all day looking at the screen. I'm working my way through reading the

I wasn't big on video games before, but now we're doing ones we can all join in



classics, which is a tedious challenge. Right now I'm on *Jane Eyre.* I just finished *Pride and Prejudice* and *Great Expectations.*

This fall, I'm supposed to go to the University of Virginia, and I'm keeping all my fingers and all my toes crossed we can go on campus. I'm excited to not only be away from these same four walls—my house, my bedroom—but also to meet new people and try new things. At home there are a lot of memories of my brother. This is the first time I've been alone for a summer at home, so it all feels foreign and different. I'm not entirely confident life will go back to normal, but I'm hopeful we can put all of this behind us.

—*AS TOLD TO* RAISA BRUNER

LAUREN ULRICH

Lauren, 17, lives in Rolla, Mo., and has plans to attend Indiana University Bloomington in the fall

MY MAIN PASSION IN LIFE IS the environment. It's what I've been working so hard for: to have an impactful career and work to protect it. But while I was spending all my time in classes, journalism, internships and advocacy groups, I kind of lost touch with why I cared about the environment. With this free time, I've been able to spend more time in nature.

I live pretty close to part of the Mark Twain National Forest. I've been hiking a lot—I even went swimming in a river near my house, even though it's pretty cold here still. When I was little, I would just go swimming somewhere for the fun of it. But I haven't done that in a long time. When I jumped back in, that was a special moment for me: to let go of how serious I've been these last few years. I've been almost like my old self again.

I've almost been intentionally trying to take a break from worrying about issues that aren't in my immediate control. Climate change is something I am incredibly passionate about, and I believe we need to be doing everything we can do to prevent it. But I'm learning through this experience that I can't do everything. I need to make sure I'm as healthy as possible, so that I can make a bigger impact in the future. Knowing our economy is so unstable right now definitely makes me nervous, because I didn't have a stable career path in the first place, and I especially don't now. But I'm still going to do it: I know it's what I'm meant to do.

—*AS TOLD TO* ANDREW R. CHOW

Lauren has won statewide awards for her environmental journalism; she's pictured at home, via Zoom

MEGAN LEE

Megan, 17, lives in Hong Kong and hopes to go to college in the fall but is undecided

In Hong Kong, lockdown started in late January or early February. So we started our online learning very early. Our school was able to adapt really well. I lost a lot of time with my friends, but getting to spend more time with my family is really nice. My brother was in university in Canada, but he came home. I was scared our living habits would clash, but I think it actually brought us a lot closer because we were forced to spend time together. It kind of like made our friends closer too—we were able to find out who our true friends are.

On House Party (a group video-chatting service), seven or eight of us like to play Cards Against Humanity. It's usually a game we play in person with real cards, but we tried it virtually, and it was actually really fun. And we love to make TikToks. They're very bad. We have very low engagement, but it's always fun to do them and laugh at each other.

It's my last year playing basketball. Every single year I would represent the school at our Southeast Asia competition. This was supposed to be my last year. We were supposed to go to Singapore with the team. It got canceled, and I was very sad about it because it's the last time I would get to play with my team and my friends.

I know that the rest of the summer will be kind of like how things are right now. My family was hoping that maybe when the quarantine measures are relaxed, we can go somewhere close like Vietnam or Japan to celebrate the end of high school. My universities that I've applied to haven't said that the fall term will be postponed until January or will be online classes, so I'm looking forward to being able to resume normal life again, kind of, but in a different environment, whether it be at the University of Hong Kong, the Chinese University of Hong Kong or St. Andrews in Scotland. I'm just hoping, but I don't think U.K. schools will postpone their fall term.

A lot has changed. Because I don't know whether or not I'll get to go to school—medicine is something I feel like I really need to be taught

> I've been considering maybe taking a gap year. A lot of my friends have as well

At school, Megan plays basketball, volleyball and softball and is vice president of the Habitat for Humanity chapter; she's pictured here at home, via Zoom in person—I've been considering maybe taking a gap year. A lot of my friends have taken this into consideration as well. I would spend half of the time traveling and doing volunteer work and the other half probably gaining work experience and, like, doing internships and stuff. Not only that, but because of corona, I've learned a lot about the medical field and the different departments that need help. It's kind of changed my thoughts about medicine—I'm maybe considering going into the intensive-care unit.

—*AS TOLD TO* AMY GUNIA

Kamryn will graduate in front of a parking lot of cars in early June; she's pictured here in her home, via Zoom

KAMRYN SNEED

Kamryn, 18, lives in Durham, N.C., and received a scholarship to attend North Carolina Central University in the fall

I CRIED THE WHOLE FIRST month. I was just watching my senior year go by, and it really hurt. I've seen each class have a prom, I've seen each class graduate. We're having a drive-in graduation ceremony at Southpoint [Mall]. All the families have to stay in their cars as the graduates walk across the stage, 6 ft. apart. I like that they're doing this, but it's still not the same. We didn't get our senior pictures taken, so my mom's sorority sister bought me a photo shoot [at home]. I was having so much fun. My family bought me a prom dress, and I'm going to have a miniprom in my yard.

Colleges are saying they're going to close campus. People always say those are the best four years of their life, and I want those to be my best four years. I don't want college if I don't get the full experience. Walking on campus, meeting new people, going to the caf, making beats on the table. I want that. I don't want just schoolwork. So far we had a virtual open house—that was actually fun.

I want to be an oral surgeon and a dentist. I still want to be a doctor. It's been my dream since second grade. I feel like we'll grasp the virus before I graduate college, but the future is a huge fear. We can't live life like we did before. It's made me think of the road differently. Right now we're just floating.

—*AS TOLD TO* JAMIE DUCHARME

I don't want college if I don't get the full experience. I don't want just schoolwork

Addison is currently out of a job and tries not to focus on the stress of impending college costs; she's pictured here at home, via Zoom

ADDISON BILODEAU

Addison, 17, lives in Greenland, N.H. She plans to attend Coastal Carolina University

To pay for college, I need to work. I usually work at a restaurant across the water in Maine, and throughout the school year I was like, "Oh, I'll just work in the summer and put in more hours." But now that the restaurant is closed I don't know if that's a possibility anymore, which is kind of nerve-racking. It definitely could impact going to college for me. I already put my deposit down, and my parents are helping me a lot. But there's housing, books, meal plans. Hopefully the restaurant will reopen or I'll find somewhere else to work. I will probably also have to take out more in student loans. My mom works for Marriott Hotels, and she's on furlough. She's very stressed but also embracing it: she's started so many projects around the house. Our whole house is painted a different color now.

I've also been getting back into crafts. Yesterday the superintendent allowed us to come into school for a socially distant pottery class, where we were allowed to glaze our finished pieces and take them home. Today I'm taking old clothes and sewing and tie-dyeing them. I started gardening, and we just got chicks to raise as chickens. And I also started taking part in a pen-pal program through school with seniors at a nursing home, who aren't allowed to see anyone or have anyone come in.

These projects are definitely a good distraction because when I turn on my phone, it's just all news about the outbreak and it's overwhelming. In some ways it does allow me to get off my phone more. Before, I would come home from school, get on my phone, watch TV, do homework. Now I get off Zoom and just want to go outside. Being able to do something that takes my mind off of it and makes me feel normal is really helpful. —*AS TOLD TO* ANDREW R. CHOW

LOUIS MAES

Louis, 17, lives in Bordeaux, France, and hopes to pursue a law degree but has not committed to a university

BEFORE THE LOCKDOWN, I WAS living a nonstop life. Between preparing for my final exams and attending competitive handball competitions, I never stopped. But when I found myself stuck at home with my two younger siblings and parents with an unlimited amount of free time, I turned toward the thing I love most: making music.

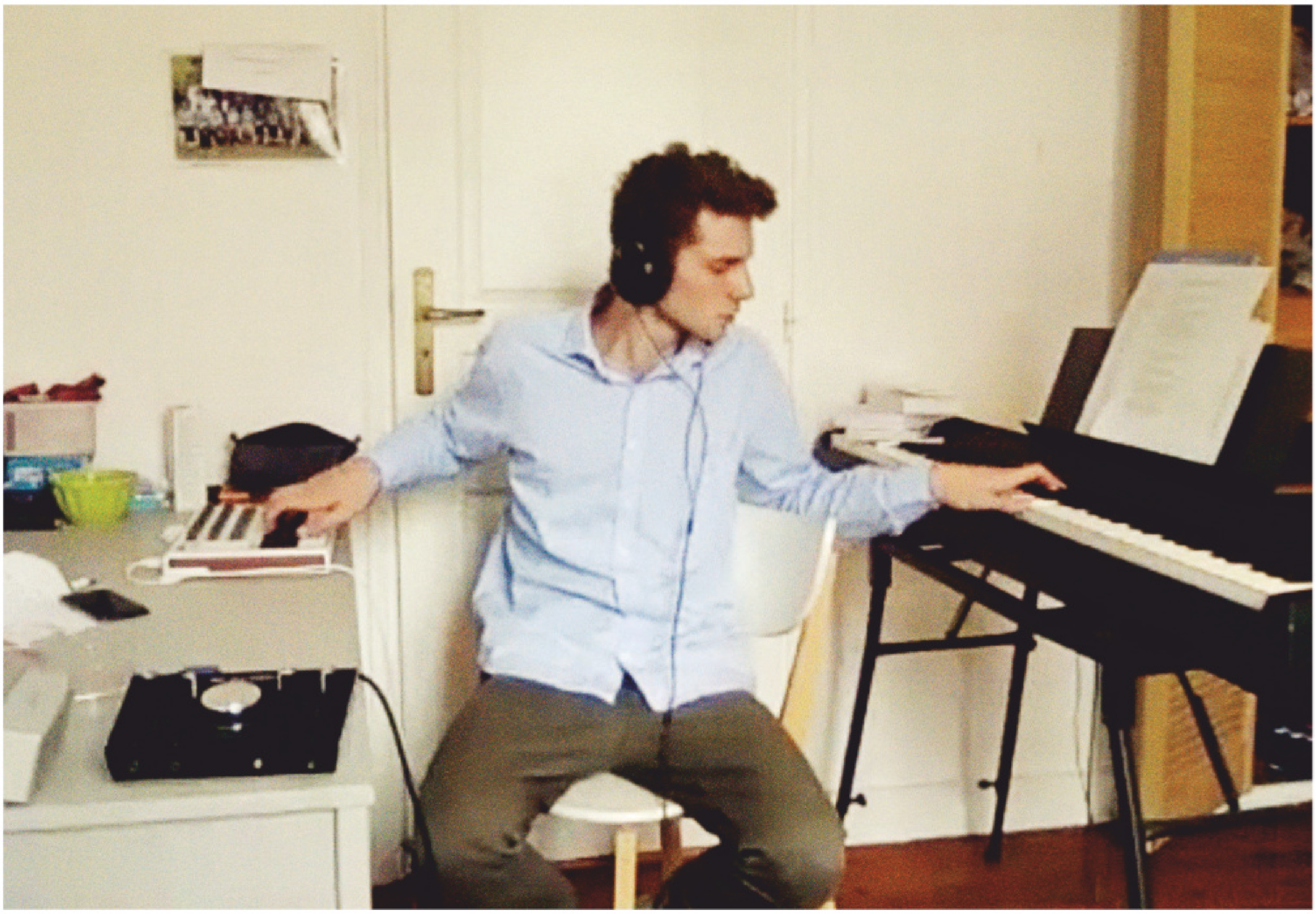
Since lockdown began, I have written more than 20 songs—polyphonic electronic music with lyrics. When you find yourself in a bubble, alone, it forces you to reflect. I write music about my life, which lets me reflect on who I want to be when lockdown ends and my adult life begins. My songs are about love, solitude and growing up. It's also given me the chance to appreciate the life I've had so far. Spending so much time with my family during my last year living at home has brought us closer.

Before lockdown, my dream was to work in the music industry. But these past few weeks have shown me that music can be a huge part of my life without being my career. It will always be there.

In some ways, this has shown me that all difficult periods can be nourishing. Of course, there have been hard days. I love solitude but not for this long. But the bad days have helped me create some very sincere music.

Over the past few months, I've realized that life will always be unstable. If you look at history, there have always been crises—moments of uncertainty and unrest. I think it's about learning how to live within them. —*AS TOLD TO* MÉLISSA GODIN

The bad days have helped me create some very sincere music



Louis uploads the music he's made while at home to Spotify; he's pictured here with his equipment, via Zoom

MARÍA VICTORIA CÁRDENAS GUERRA

María Victoria, 18, lives in Buenos Aires and plans to attend the University of Buenos Aires

I THOUGHT I HAD LIVED THROUGH every kind of crisis. I'm Venezuelan, and the political and migratory crisis brought me to Colombia and then Argentina. I grew up acutely aware of how fragile our society and economy were. But I never worried about health.

Since the pandemic started, my worldview has completely changed. I grew up in countries where the government was not doing what they were supposed to do, but I always thought that Europe and North America had it figured out—I saw them as these utopias. But when I watched the news and saw how badly some authorities there were handling the crisis, it made me angry. This pandemic has made me want to study political science and economics so that I can positively influence people's lives.

In many ways, this has forced me to become an adult. My parents were visiting family in Venezuela when the lockdown was announced and have not been able to re-enter the country. I'm living on my own, taking classes throughout the day and caring for the household in the evening. My parents send me money for food and things like that. In my spare time, I've been working on an autobiography, and a series of short stories about feminism in Argentina. I've always loved writing, and lockdown has been an opportunity to focus on projects I've been dreaming about since I was 13 years old.

In many ways, this has forced me to become an adult

Of course, there are days when I feel sad. I watched the graduating class celebrate together last year and was so looking forward to experiencing that myself. But when I look at how many people are suffering, it makes me really grateful that I can stay home, eat and finish my education.

I don't know if this pandemic will make us—our generation—paranoid. But I think it will make us really involved in everything from health to economic to political issues. I don't think it is a negative thing to grow up like this. After all, this pandemic shows us how far we can go when we do what is best for everyone. —*AS TOLD TO* MÉLISSA GODIN

María Victoria, pictured here at home alone, via Zoom; her parents have been locked out of the country for weeks because of coronavirus restrictions

In her free time, Lorraie meets remotely with the social-activism group Teens Take Charge; she's pictured here at home, via Zoom

TEENS
take
CHARGE

LORRAIE FORBES

Lorraie, 17, lives in Brooklyn and recently joined the U.S. Navy

I AM SUPPOSED TO REPORT FOR boot camp in September. I'm trying to prepare myself physically and mentally, but it's hard because the gyms are closed. I'm upset about pools being closed too, because part of the Navy physical-screening test is swimming. I'm a terrible swimmer. This was the time I needed to practice. I've been working out three to six hours a day at home. I have a barbell, dumbbell and a pull-up bar and am using random household items: chairs for dips and my scale to measure out 10 lb. of books or bags of sugar.

I pray all the time. Meditating on the Word I get on Sunday helps me keep myself sane. It also helps to keep myself occupied, so I've been making myself and my sister a detailed schedule every day. Online school has been a challenge, especially because I can't look at a computer for long without my vision getting blurry and getting headaches. And my school isn't teaching right now—they just hand you work, give you a due date, and that's it.

I'm also involved in social- and political-justice activism. All the accounts of recent police brutality have made me rethink my career after I leave the Navy. We've been seeing how the system wasn't made for people of our kind. All of these incidents, especially in my area in Brownsville, have made me want to pursue a career in law enforcement: to change the system from within.

—*AS TOLD TO* ANDREW R. CHOW

Their day-to-day lives have changed dramatically. They don't know what the future holds. But many young people still see brighter times ahead

THE UPSIDE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

When I'm feeling isolated at home, I can log on to find community

By Camryn Garrett

ILLUSTRATION BY PAUL GARLAND FOR TIME

IN MAY, I EXPERIENCED WHAT FELT LIKE A personal concert by two of my favorite performers. Really, I was sitting in my living room, and 700,000 other people were watching too.

It was the latest "Verzuz" battle—in which two artists perform from their homes while fans egg them on in the comments—and the competitors were Jill Scott and Erykah Badu. But the event felt more like a celebration than a duel. Scott and Badu discussed homeschooling their children, shared stories behind hit songs and complimented each other's work. Michelle Obama even left comments and tagged her husband.

The series was launched in March by Swizz Beatz and Timbaland, and whenever one of these battles happens, I see all the black people on my Twitter feed talking about it. Despite our physical distance, it feels like a group activity, a barbecue or cookout that everyone attends to gossip or hype one another up while enjoying some amazing music.

I definitely didn't expect social media to soothe the emotional impact of a global health crisis. Much has been written about the negatives of social media, like bullying and self-esteem issues, and you don't have to log on for long to observe some of the toxicity. But right now, for so many young people like me isolated at home, social media has been a lifeline.

While some have used it to entertain, others have used it to share information and educate. On April 30, filmmaker Ava DuVernay hosted her annual ARRAY tweet-a-thon, bringing together more than 60 directors—legends like Mira Nair, Julie Dash and Guillermo del Toro, as well as newcomers like Lulu Wang and Cathy Yan—to share their industry knowledge. As a black woman, I've always figured it would be hard to become a director, and with film festivals canceled, movie theaters closed and productions halted, the dream seems even more distant. This tweet-a-thon didn't just provide insight from established directors; it humanized them. It reminded me that they're also film nerds stuck at home, planning and hoping for their next projects. When asked what advice she'd give black women trying to break into the industry, one of my favorite directors, Gina Prince-Bythewood, responded, "Your first film/script should announce to the world who you are. So write a story that is personal, write a story only you can tell. And make sure it is dope." I felt like she was speaking directly to me.

I TOLD A TWITTER FRIEND I WANTED TO TRY PLANTING. A WEEK LATER, SEED PACKETS ARRIVED IN THE MAIL

OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS, I've felt locked up in my home (which I know I'm privileged to have), but being

on social media has made me feel like the world isn't so small. When I tweet about being sad or depressed, people send messages telling me that they're available to talk and that I'm not alone. I told a friend I know only through Twitter that I wanted to try planting. A week later, several packets of seeds and a card with instructions arrived in the mail.

I don't want to make light of what's going on. So many people are dying, and besides social distancing and following other precautions, there's not much I can do. It's easy to despair, but when I log on to social media and see people trying to spread positivity, I can't help but feel hopeful too.

Garrett is a sophomore at NYU and the author of Full Disclosure

The unwavering energy and optimism of my generation

BY AMIKA GEORGE

For my generation, the future was scary enough before we entered a global pandemic. Suddenly, the future feels so uncertain that speculating has become futile. It is comforting, however, to focus on the present and what I already know about my generation.

Although we have been dismissed as Generation Snowflake, young people globally have capitalized on our collective power. When the issues we care about were overlooked, we realized that political apathy was not an option. We showed that when young people channel our energy and take to the streets demanding change, our efforts can't be ignored.

COVID-19 has also illuminated the generational differences in how we respond to catastrophe. Although it's mocked as a meaningless distraction by those who don't get it, it's no wonder young people have taken to TikTok during the pandemic. We value authenticity and simplicity, honesty and humor. We're also creative, energetic and resilient, even in the face of fear and uncertainty.

Worldwide, we are watching our unwritten futures becoming increasingly bleak and unpredictable. Inequalities are widening, and the job market feels doomed before we even enter it. When this is all over, we will need to rediscover our common humanity and find the strength to reimagine a radically different future. I am confident that my generation is up to the task. It will require us to do what we were already doing: question the status quo, campaign for systemic change, and refuse to neglect the health of our people and planet.

In the midst of a crisis in which hundreds of thousands are dying and the most vulnerable, and most oppressed, are being hit the hardest, daring to choose hope over fear, worry or panic seems impossible. But given the ambition, optimism and passion that characterize my generation, I think we'll get through this.

George is a second-year student at Cambridge University and the founder of Free Periods, a campaign to end period poverty

TIME FOR KIDS

TIME for Kids received letters from students expressing their feelings during this crisis

It feels like being trapped sometimes. Then, when we go out of the house, it's like we're free, like a bird out of its cage for the first time.

Emma Rich, 11,
Dover, N.H.

TIME FOR KIDS

My dad works in a hospital as a doctor. We can't hug him when he comes home until he takes a shower. He is at the hospital many times until nighttime.

Adrian Garces, 5,
Miami

Staying home has made me realize that this is the perfect time to bond with your family.

Araina Potnis, 9,
Wayne, Pa.

THE STORIES WE TELL

The voices of black and brown people matter—and they're finally being heard By Naomi Wadler

AHMAUD ARBERY WAS SHOT and killed while out for a run. Breonna Taylor was killed after cops entered her apartment while she slept. Black and brown people are dying from COVID-19 at a disproportionate rate. Black and brown people are bearing the brunt of COVID-19's economic impact.

As a black woman in America, I often feel that there is not much to be hopeful about, and these times are certainly no different. I see the news and, while I am outraged, I am sadly not surprised. Stories like these are as old as this country.

I often feel the work I do as an activist makes no difference and the effort is futile. But there's another way to look at these headlines too. I'm still a student, and I understand from what I've learned about history—in and out of class—that in the past these stories were unlikely to have been told at all.

In the case of Arbery, an unarmed black man was shot while out on a jog, and for months no arrests were made. But people like Brittany Packnett Cunningham and Don Lemon used their platforms to rally folks to action. People made calls, tweeted and protested. The story was told and retold to a growing audience. Then in May, 74 days after Arbery's death, two men were arrested and charged in connection with the shooting.

It isn't new for people to march and stand up for what is right, but we are in an age where the news coverage is changing, where the world is taking a little more notice, where more people are finding their voices and using them to help others.

In January, I was invited to speak at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, as part of a group of young folks they called "changemakers." While it remains to be seen if they will be moved to action, the white, wealthy men who typically populate such gatherings clearly realized the need for young, diverse voices. Rooms full of adults who engage with and show up for black and brown kids on panels matter. There, we can tell the stories that historically have been overlooked.

We live in a country where economic disparities are the norm. Because of systematic racism, the black and brown people who work as hourly essential workers have found both their jobs and their health at risk. I see nothing positive in this reality.

But the fact that the stories of these people are being told is a small sign of progress. When you hear the voices of people directly affected by the disease and by the long-standing and virulent societal inequities, it's that much harder to truthfully say you had no idea. And then it's that much harder to do nothing. Knowing that it's possible to raise awareness like this, both in the news and in community conversation, inspires me to keep going even when I feel discouraged. It gives me hope that each of us can work toward a more equitable future for girls like me.

Wadler is an activist and seventh-grade student in Washington, D.C.

You don’t have to be hopeful to keep fighting for a better future

BY ISABELLE AXELSSON

Many people expect climate activists like myself to have hope. Seeing thousands, even millions, of young people on the streets all over the world, and knowing that you are not alone in wanting to secure a safe future without suffering, must give us hope, right? For some, it does. However, many of us are struggling, or even at peace, with not having hope for the future. Instead, our activism is rooted in a sense of justice, perhaps anger, and definitely the need to do everything in our power to ensure that future generations don’t need to take on the same fight we are.

Being stubborn and not wanting to give up the cause, no matter how hopeless it seems, might sound depressing. But to me, it shows the strength of teenagers and young adults. Even though the task ahead of us may seem impossible, we are still prioritizing it and tackling it head-on because anything less than a future that ensures climate justice for everyone is unacceptable.

Still, even when it is not usually hope that drives you, it can sometimes be difficult to feel motivated, especially when you can’t feed off the energy of those who share your mission. Today, we are mostly stuck in our homes because of the COVID-19 pandemic, communicating with friends and co-activists online, and unable to gather in crowds. For teenagers with no education about health care, staying at home and social distancing is the most important thing we can do to avoid spreading the virus. But sitting at home and studying while seeing all the death, the suffering caused by the economic situation and even people ignoring the crisis and not doing their part is incredibly frustrating. It’s doubly so for those of us who are used to identifying a problem and then using our physical presence to draw attention to it.

IT’S HARD TO FEEL MOTIVATED WHEN YOU CAN’T FEED OFF THE ENERGY OF THOSE WHO SHARE YOUR MISSION

At the same time, however, this crisis has been a reminder of all the ways we can connect with like-minded individuals around the world even when we can’t get together in person. The situation might seem hopeless and society might never be the same, but that should not stop us from working toward a better future for everyone.

Whether it’s climate or another issue, you don’t have to feel hope to be motivated to keep fighting for what you believe in. Find something that pushes you to do what is right even when the future looks bleak. Maybe even *especially* when the future looks bleak.

Axelsson is a first-year student at Stockholm University and an organizer in the Fridays for Future climate movement

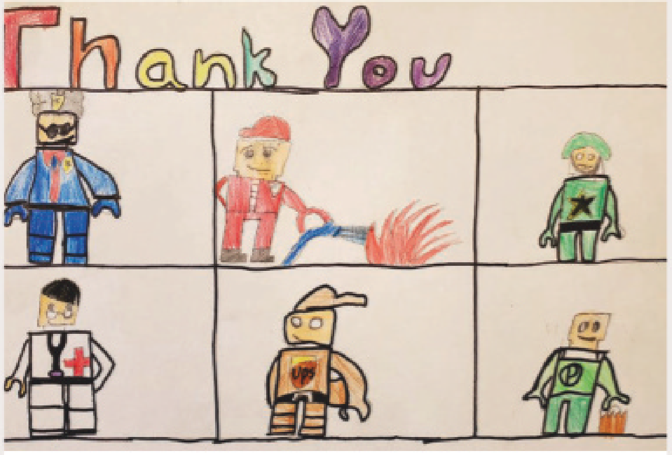
TIME FOR KIDS

If my friends are perhaps reading this, I do want to say I really miss them.

Madelynn Allen, 12,
Englewood, Colo.

This new virus can be pretty scary. If you’re someone who’s easily worried, my advice is to talk to someone you know well about how you feel. Sometimes they can reassure you.

Holly Hook, 9,
Brooklyn



I don’t get to see my friends much, or my dad. He works for UPS. I appreciate what essential workers and first responders are doing to keep the world safe!

Caleb Harris, 8,
Douglasville, Ga.

THE POSSIBILITIES AFTER THE PANDEMIC

It's hard to picture a future after this crisis, but together we'll help shape it **By Abigail Harrison**

ILLUSTRATION BY PAUL GARLAND FOR TIME

EXTREME SOCIAL ISOLATION. I'VE given this extensive thought, since long before the COVID-19 pandemic. Why? Because I aspire to be an astronaut; specifically, I aspire to be the first person to walk on Mars. I've dreamed of this for as long as I can remember. For more than a decade, I've prepared myself for what that Mars mission would be like, and the extreme isolation I would experience. I've grappled with the idea of being separated from my family and friends, knowing that I may never see them again. Now, one of my greatest fears—which I only expected to experience in combination with living out my Mars dream—has suddenly become a reality for people around the world.

ONE OF MY GREATEST FEARS HAS BECOME A REALITY FOR PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly affected my generation, Generation Z, and will continue to affect us for years to come. In a matter of weeks, many of our best-laid plans have fallen apart. Some people expected to participate in commencement ceremonies and instead will mark this milestone through a screen. Others looked forward to moving to another city for a fresh start only to find themselves stuck in place. I was scheduled to travel through China and Russia to participate in important research but instead remained in my home in Minneapolis. On my journey to becoming an astronaut, I know the potential implications of missing opportunities like this.

Losing so much control over our lives, combined with the isolation that comes from social distancing, has made the pandemic feel nearly impossible to

TIME FOR KIDS

I've been in quarantine for over two months, and one of the ways I've kept in touch with friends has been through *Fortnite.* A lot of parents think the game is addictive, but when they forbid it instead of setting clear time limits, their kids miss out.

Fortnite is better than talking on FaceTime because you can do things like build and fight alongside each other. You can also team up with friends and play against people around the world. And when nothing else is going on in your life but you still want to talk, you can discuss what's happening in the game. Plus, you can connect with friends without asking your parents if you can use their phone.

Parents, it's hard for your kids not to see their friends in person. Don't deprive them of another way to hang out. Let them play *Fortnite.*

Eli Smith, 10,
Brooklyn

overcome. Know what else feels nearly impossible? Going to Mars. But I assure you, they're both possible.

AFTER MONTHS of what feels like a hopeless new normal, I find myself feeling abundantly hopeful. This pandemic has shown how truly meaningless borders are, and how resilient, empathetic and caring we can be. I've seen people forge bonds with one another across political lines, national borders and generational divides. I've seen musical performances everywhere from social media to empty streets by people seeking to bring joy to their neighbors and life to their neighborhoods. I've seen people risk their lives to care for others. And most incredibly, I've seen masses of people choose to cast themselves into isolation to protect people they will never know. These months have reaffirmed what I now recall seeing all my life—in our darkest times, people rise to the occasion to lift each other up.

Of course, it's not always easy to stay positive in these difficult times. There's no denying the reality of what so many families are going through. Grant yourself permission to fully experience your emotions—positive and negative. Give yourself space to grieve what you've lost. Allow yourself time to process and come to grips with whatever you're now facing. And extend that same generosity to those around you. Once you've done that, look for things in your life that genuinely bring you hope and joy.

While it is unsettling to face the unknown, I take comfort in knowing that we're all facing it together. I know there will be a long road ahead, but I also believe that we'll emerge on the other side stronger and more unified. The world will no longer exist as we once knew it, and we will have the opportunity to reshape it and make it a better place for all who inhabit it. Now is not the time for fear; it's the time to be bold and dream big.

Harrison is the co-founder and president of the Mars Generation, a nonprofit focused on educating young people and adults about human space exploration

TIME FOR KIDS

> **One week turned into two weeks, two weeks turned into four weeks, and all of the sudden we weren't going back to school this year. This makes me really sad.**
>
> **Madyson Reed, 9,**
> Spring Branch, Texas

The enduring power of empathy in a time of crisis

BY SALVADOR GÓMEZ-COLÓN

I was 5 when I fell from my grandmother's counter and slammed against the concrete floor. I heard my grandmother scream and run toward me. Then I told her, with a surprising amount of confidence, that I would be O.K. and just needed to call my mom. "Hola, Mamá," I said. "I just wanted to let you know that I split open my chin, but please don't worry because I'll be fine." I was an optimist then, and I'm still one now.

This doesn't mean I don't worry. I'm alarmed by the rising COVID-19 death toll. I'm scared because I suffer from chronic asthma, as do some of my family members. I'm also discouraged by those who blatantly violate social-distancing guidelines. Yet even in these trying times, I know there is a reason to stay hopeful. Though I'm only 17, I've already learned that while some people react to crisis with indifference or finger-pointing, far more respond with empathy for their fellow human beings.

During my freshman year of high school, Puerto Rico faced off against Hurricane Maria and I felt like I had woken up to a nightmare. Outside my flooded apartment, I saw fallen branches and streetlamps, shattered windows and homes without roofs. All of us were reeling from the devastation, but we were not alone in our pain. We were facing a situation that was bigger than ourselves. We needed to pay attention to others, recognize how they felt and commit to understanding their world. In our moment of crisis, empathy didn't mean merely feeling for others. It was turning the emotions into positive actions, with the common purpose of supporting each other.

Harnessing our empathy is necessary if we want to overcome the current crisis. That's why I continue to be inspired when I see other young people work for the betterment for their families, communities and world. There are countless ways to support each other even as we remain physically separate, whether it's sewing masks for vulnerable populations or writing thank-you notes to essential workers.

I know this new reality is hard for all of us. But I've seen what we can do when we look for ways to help others. And in the midst of this global crisis, I'm seeing it again.

Gómez-Colón is a high school junior and the founder of Light and Hope for Puerto Rico

Health

How remdesivir became the first and biggest hope for treating COVID-19

BY ALICE PARK

PHOTOGRAPH BY KENJI AOKI FOR TIME

For Clinical Trial Use Only
Remdesivir (GS-5734TM) Injection, 5
Contents: 21.2 mL.
Store under refrigeration, 2 – 8 °C (36 –
For intravenous use. See clinical study
protocol for dosage and administration.
Keep out of reach of children.
Caution: New Drug - Limited by Fede
(USA) law to investigational use.
Sponsor: Gilead Sciences, Inc., 333 La
Foster City, CA 94404, USA. Tel: +1 80

Dr. George Diaz was at home in Edmonds, Wash., on Jan. 20 at 8:30 p.m., when his phone rang with news that he was both anticipating and dreading.

On the line was his hospital's infection-prevention manager, who had just received a call from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The agency wanted Providence Regional Medical Center to admit a patient who was infected with the novel coronavirus, which at that point had been reported only in China (where the first reported cases had emerged in December), Thailand, Japan and South Korea. The patient was the first confirmed case of COVID-19 in the U.S.

"They didn't force us," Diaz says. "We never considered saying no." Because this was the first known patient in the country with the new infection, CDC scientists wanted to admit him for observation, in case his disease worsened.

Back in 2015, Providence Regional had been designated to receive people with Ebola infections, so administrators were prepared to convert hospital space into physical-isolation units as well as deploy a team, led by Diaz, trained to manage highly infectious patients. Still, they were essentially flying blind when it came to the new coronavirus. In January, little was known about the virus, only that it had originated in China and appeared to be infectious—although it wasn't clear how infectious—and potentially deadly. There was no treatment and no playbook to help doctors decide how to care for patients. Diaz instructed his team to rely on their training and to use the same safety precautions they would in caring for an Ebola patient: they donned full protective gear, isolated the patient and limited any direct contact.

These decisions proved prescient. The patient, who wishes to protect his privacy and remain anonymous, lives in the Seattle suburbs and had just returned from a visit with family members in Wuhan, China. He seemed relatively healthy when he was admitted to the hospital; he had a cough but no fever. But that quickly changed. Over the next few days, he developed a fever that spiked to 103°F, his cough worsened, and he complained of trouble breathing. Diaz gave him supplemental oxygen, but his condition continued to deteriorate. "We made contingency plans to move him to the ICU if he got worse," he says.

Before doing that, however, Diaz tried something else: remdesivir.

In lab studies, the 11-year-old experimental drug had shown promise in fighting SARS and MERS, two illnesses caused by coronaviruses in the same family as SARS-CoV-2, which causes COVID-19. But there was no reason to believe it would work against this new coronavirus. "We really had no idea what to expect," says Diaz. "There was no evidence, zero experience in humans with this [disease]." But, given the circumstances, Diaz was willing to try anything with even a glimmer of scientific grounding.

What began as a hope-for-the-best decision in a hospital in Washington has since mushroomed into a worldwide rush for the drug, which has become a beacon of hope in a pandemic that has driven people into home confinement, shuttered entire industries and hobbled national economies. TIME conducted dozens of interviews with the doctors involved in the first human studies of the drug in the sickest patients, public-health experts and industry insiders to create the most comprehensive chronicle yet of how a new therapy can emerge in the midst of this coronavirus pandemic when the urgent need to treat patients clashes with normally time-consuming regulatory requirements to ensure safety and efficacy. Remdesivir could be the first real treatment for COVID-19 that finally gives man even a slight upper hand against microbe.

REMDESIVIR'S JOURNEY from idea to treatment is unprecedented. That path, by necessity, has taken advantage of innovative regulatory pathways to—and is telescoping—the normal drug-development timeline, to meet urgent medical needs while producing a safe, effective drug. Diaz, local public-health officials and the CDC scientists who advised him published an account of their experience, and word quickly spread in the medical community about the potential promise of remdesivir. Chinese researchers, the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) and the pharmaceutical company behind the drug, Gilead, all launched studies of remdesivir's efficacy in treating COVID-19. In April, Gilead revealed both the NIAID study and its own were looking positive. (Trials are ongoing.) Based on those encouraging signs, on May 1, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued an emergency-use authorization that allows doctors to treat severely ill COVID-19 patients with remdesivir. Japanese health officials issued a similar clearance days later.

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Technicians at Gilead's remdesivir-manufacturing facility in La Verne, Calif., on March 18

GILEAD SCIENCES INC./REUTERS

Remdesivir was initially investigated as a treatment for another lethal viral disease, Ebola. In animal studies, the experimental drug seemed to control Ebola infections. But in a head-to-head trial of four Ebola treatments on humans, remdesivir did not seem to improve chances of survival compared with two of the other experimental therapies. Unwilling to give up on its investment in the drug, however, Gilead remained hopeful that remdesivir might be useful in treating Ebola patients soon after infection, even if it didn't work so well on those who had become really sick. "We were basically on hold with the drug, waiting to see if there would be another outbreak to see if we could test it earlier in the infection," says Dr. Merdad Parsey, chief medical officer at Gilead.

When, in early 2020, researchers reported a link between a newly identified coronavirus and a mysterious, pneumonia-like illness surfacing in China, Parsey and his team at Gilead saw an opportunity. In their yearslong investigation of remdesivir for Ebola, they had also tested the drug in the lab against coronaviruses like SARS and MERS. In those studies, remdesivir actually showed stronger activity than it had against Ebola. Parsey's team quickly picked up that research where it had left off, trying to understand if remdesivir could potentially treat COVID-19.

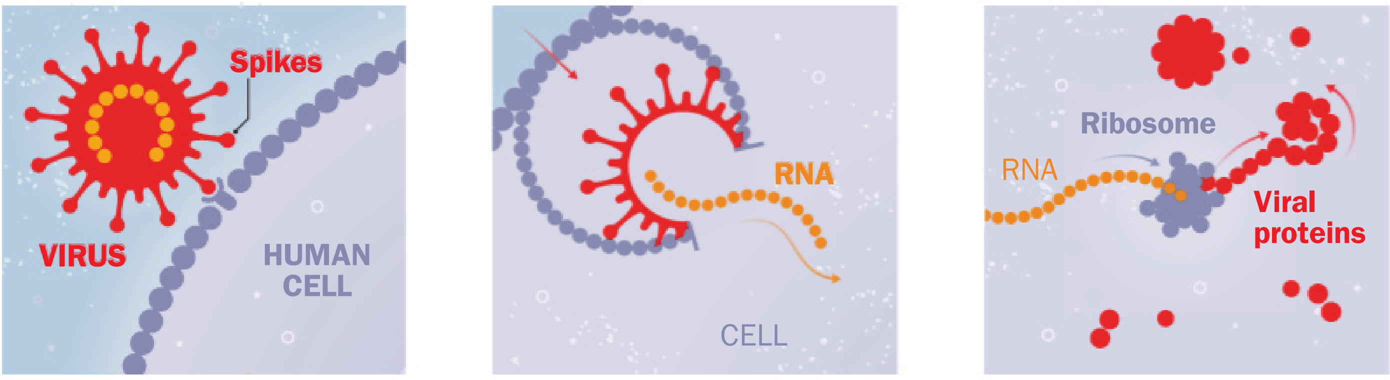
By the time Diaz's patient flew from Wuhan to Seattle on Jan. 15, the virus had penetrated deep into most parts of China. Other countries, including the U.S., were bracing for COVID-19 to breach their borders but were still unsure how dangerous a threat it posed. While the patient felt fine during the transoceanic flight, he felt feverish the next day, and after trying to recover at home he went to an urgent-care center on Jan. 19. Aware of the escalating number of cases in Wuhan, he shared his travel history and raised the possibility that he might be infected with the novel coronavirus. The urgent-care team notified Washington State and county health officials, who then alerted the CDC, where experts recommended testing the patient for COVID-19. The urgent-care staff took samples from the back of the patient's nose and throat as well as from his mouth, then told him to return home and remain in isolation while they sent the samples to the CDC's Atlanta labs.

Technicians at the agency ran the test overnight and confirmed the following day that he was positive for SARS-CoV-2. CDC infectious-disease experts then called Washington State health officials as well as Diaz and his Providence Regional infectious-disease team—who hadn't yet heard about the case—suggesting that the patient be admitted to the hospital for observation.

Relying on his hospital's infectious-disease train-

How remdesivir works

SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, infects people by hijacking the body's cells to replicate itself. The experimental drug remdesivir puts the brakes on that process



1 Coronaviruses **are covered** by a shell of spiky proteins; these proteins help the virus **bind to healthy cells**

2 The virus **fuses with the cell,** which allows it to **release a strand** of genetic material called RNA

3 Tiny particles in the host cell, called ribosomes, **read the code** on the viral RNA and **produce viral proteins**

ing, which included patient transport, Diaz contacted a local emergency medical service, whose staff knew how to be properly protected against potential infection when they picked up the patient from his home, then waited for him in Providence Regional's shipping bay; using that entrance allowed the hospital staff to get the patient directly to the readied special-pathogens unit with minimal contact with others. Following their Ebola training, Diaz and his team protected themselves from head to toe. The patient arrived in an isopod, an isolation system in which a person is essentially zipped into a clear plastic cocoon with filtered breathing equipment to minimize the risk of spreading infection.

"He was obviously scared," says Diaz. "He's the first guy in the U.S. with coronavirus, and he's super isolated, and everyone around him is wearing Ebola suits. It's super stressful. He was concerned about stories he heard about people there dying and getting very sick. He was very aware that the situation in the areas from where he had come was not good."

His room wasn't exactly inviting either. He was admitted to a separate unit with filtered, pressurized air that flowed into but not out of the room in order to reduce the chance of any virus circulating into the rest of the hospital. The medical team could see and communicate with him through a large window, but to further protect themselves from infection, the staff relied on a robot—a computer screen on wheels equipped with devices for measuring vital signs, as well as a microphone. Diaz used the robot's "stethoscope" to listen to the patient's heart and lungs from the next room. For the first five days, Diaz gave him cough medicine, acetaminophen for his fever and fluids to keep him hydrated.

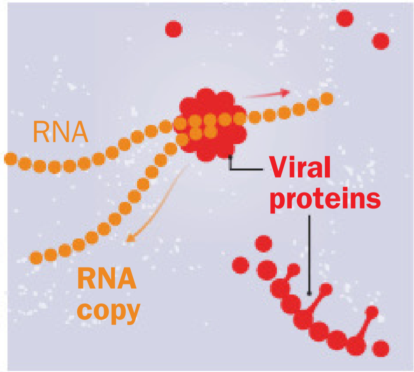
On Jan. 26, his sixth night in the hospital, the patient started having trouble breathing. The following day, Diaz put him on supplemental oxygen and ordered X-rays, which indicated to him that the patient had developed pneumonia; his oxygen levels also began to drop. The CDC team suggested Diaz call Dr. Tim Uyeki in Atlanta.

Uyeki, chief medical officer for the CDC's influenza division, has extensive experience working with the World Health Organization through various flu and respiratory-disease outbreaks, including SARS in 2003 and the H5N1 bird flu that swept many parts of the world in the early 2000s. After hearing about the patient's deteriorating health, Uyeki suggested that Diaz consider remdesivir.

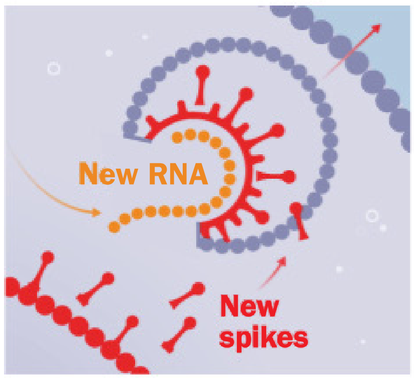
He based that idea on a paper published in January by a team led by coronavirus expert Ralph Baric at the University of North Carolina and including scientists at Gilead, which showed that remdesivir seemed to control the MERS coronavirus in mice, as well as a 2017 study from some of the same researchers showing that the drug helped mice infected with SARS and MERS improve. The Ebola studies showing that remdesivir was generally safe for people added to Uyeki's conviction. So did a conversation he'd had with Baric earlier in the month about remdesivir's potential to treat COVID-19; based on Baric's response, Uyeki says, it seemed worth a try.

BACK AT GILEAD'S HEADQUARTERS in Foster City, Calif., there was only a limited supply of remdesivir on hand. Diaz had to request that the company provide the drug on a "compassionate use" basis, which allows drugmakers to release unapproved drugs like remdesivir on a case-by-case basis to doctors who ask for them, as long as the FDA sanctions it. That federal agency "wanted a bunch of clinical information, which we provided," says Diaz. "There were folks looking at all of this data from [the patient's] clinical charts basically overnight." Around 5 a.m. on Jan. 27, the FDA gave the go-ahead, and Diaz called Gilead. That afternoon, a shipment of 11 100-mg vials of the drug, enough for a starting dose of 200 mg and 100 mg for 10 days, arrived in Everett.

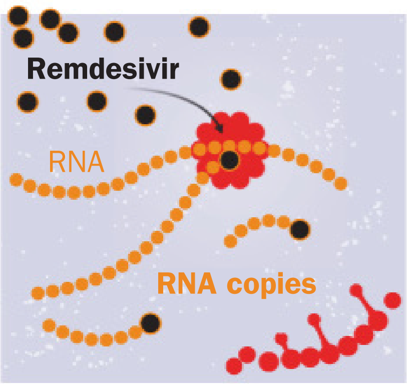
Beginning at around dinnertime that day, the



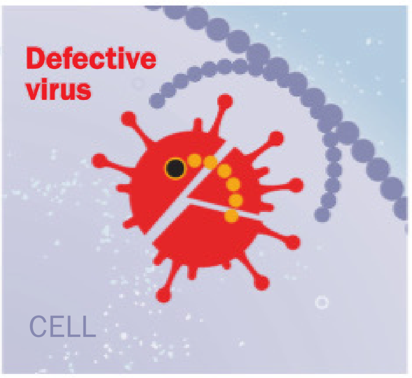
④ The viral proteins are needed to **make more copies** of the viral RNA and other virus parts



⑤ All viral parts, including the copied RNA and the spiky proteins, **assemble** into a new virus that **exits the cell**



⑥ Remdesivir **stops** the RNA copying process; incomplete RNA strands **can't produce** critical virus parts



⑦ This **slows** and **prevents** virus assembly; defective viruses with partial RNA **can't replicate** in other cells

patient received his first intravenous infusion of remdesivir. He didn't seem to show any immediate adverse reactions to the drug, so at around 9 p.m., Diaz decided to go home. The next morning, he returned not knowing what to expect—at best, Diaz thought, his patient would have remained in stable condition.

But when he got to the special unit, Diaz was "shocked, surprised and happy," he says. The patient's temperature had dropped, his oxygen levels improved, and by the end of the day he no longer needed supplemental oxygen to breathe.

Almost immediately, global efforts to study the drug's effects on COVID-19 started to speed up. Researchers in China, where reports suggested thousands of new cases were mounting daily by late January, reached out to Gilead asking about remdesivir. The pharmaceutical company made the drug available to them under a compassionate-use program, and the Chinese researchers and doctors initiated a formal trial to compare remdesivir with a placebo.

Doctors around the world began asking for the drug to treat COVID-19 patients on a compassionate-use basis. "We got inundated with a large number of requests," says Gilead's Parsey, and because each case needed to be reviewed individually, "it got to the point where we were unable to ethically keep going because it was taking so long to process each patient and we had a backlog of patients," he says.

After treating more than 1,700 people, mostly in the U.S., the company made the controversial decision on March 22 to stop the initial compassionate-use program and instead develop and direct patients to an expanded-use program to better manage the backlog of requests. Severely ill patients could also participate in one of the two company studies or the NIAID trial, begun on Feb. 21 and now under way at various medical centers around the world. "It is heartbreaking for us—I can't tell you the number of times we get people asking for the drug," says Parsey. "It's incredibly challenging for us."

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA Medical Center in Omaha, Dr. Andre Kalil carefully monitored the case report of Diaz's patient, which was published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* on March 5. His interest was more than cursory; the previous week, Kalil had begun caring for COVID-19 patients flown from the cruise ship *Diamond Princess,* anchored at Yokohama, Japan, to the university for quarantine and medical care. Two of the patients developed pneumonia, which qualified them to become the first to receive remdesivir infusions in the NIAID study when it was launched. For Kalil, any information about how people responded to remdesivir was welcome.

Some 1,000 patients at 68 other hospitals around the world (including 47 sites in the U.S.) quickly followed. At Emory University in Atlanta, Dr. Aneesh Mehta, associate professor of infectious diseases, and his team enrolled 103 people with severe COVID-19 symptoms. "For me as a clinician, and as a clinician-scientist, science is hope," he says. "Once we launched the trial, there was a definite sense of hope and excitement amongst our clinical teams, and also the patients."

One of those patients was Bill Clark, a retired attorney from Atlanta, who began feeling sick with fever, chills, coughing and lethargy on April 6. A little over a week later, worried he might have COVID-19 and at the suggestion of his personal physician, he went to the emergency room at Emory St. Joseph's Hospital, where doctors decided to admit him even before his COVID-19 test results were complete. Chest X-rays showed early signs of pneumonia. "That was the first time a sense of fear started creeping in," he says. "Everybody I saw was fully gowned, fully gloved, with N-95 masks plus a full face shield over their masks."

'I can't tell you the number of times we get people asking for the drug.'

At midnight, a nurse woke him up with some difficult news. "I awakened to see somebody in a full hazmat suit, and she took my vitals and grabbed my

GRAPHIC BY EMILY BARONE AND LON TWEETEN

hand and said, 'Mr. Clark, your COVID test came back early, and you are positive.' And then she said, 'I promise you everything is going to be O.K.' That was pretty important at that time to hear," he says.

After a sleepless night, one of Clark's first calls the next morning came from the director of Emory's clinical-trials unit, offering him the opportunity to join the NIAID study. Volunteers would be randomly assigned to receive either an experimental but promising drug called remdesivir, he was told, or a placebo, and neither the doctors nor the patients would know what they were getting.

Clark's first reaction was, "I want to be helpful, but I'm pretty sick. I really want a treatment; I don't want a placebo. I want something to treat this condition, get me well and get me the heck out of this hospital." He called his personal doctor, who urged him to consider the trial, and after discussing it with his wife, Clark decided to enroll. "If I might be helpful to the research process, then I was all in," he says.

That afternoon, Clark received his first infusion—he has no way to know if it was remdesivir or a placebo. "I'm pretty sure I never prayed so hard over a medical procedure in my life as I watched that fluid going into my arm," he says. "I was awfully hopeful that whatever was going in was going to be the treatment for what I was dealing with."

He still doesn't know whether he received remdesivir or a placebo, but over the next three days, as he received daily infusions, he began feeling better. His two main symptoms, fever and diarrhea, started to improve, and by the third day he didn't feel as tired and was able to sit up and watch TV. "I remember telling my wife, 'Whatever they are giving me must be making a difference. Because I'm not completely there yet, but I'm starting to feel like a new person,' " he says. The next day, April 19, Clark was well enough to be discharged from the hospital, and following his doctors' instructions he began a 14-day period of self-isolation at home so he wouldn't spread the infection to his wife and daughter.

'This will be the standard of care ... What it has proven is a drug can block this virus.'

Around the time Clark was discharged, doctors were getting their first hints of how effective remdesivir might be. The media outlet STAT obtained a video call updating doctors at the University of Chicago on the study at that institution. It hinted that the support for remdesivir was well placed: the Chicago researchers, who were part of one of Gilead's sponsored studies, reported that their severely ill remdesivir patients improved enough for most of them to be discharged from the hospital. A week and a half later, on April 29, Gilead announced that an early review of data from the first 500 patients in the NIAID trial was equally encouraging. It was enough to prompt NIAID director Dr. Anthony Fauci to say, "This will be the standard of care ... What it has proven is a drug can block this virus." People taking the drug recovered after an average of 11 days, compared with 15 days for those assigned the placebo. The people taking remdesivir also had a lower death rate—8% compared with 11.6% for those in the placebo group.

April 15
Bill Clark in the ER of Emory St. Joseph's Hospital, before he was admitted for suspected COVID-19

On the same day, Gilead released other promising data from one of its two sponsored studies. Those include only patients treated with the drug, without comparing them to a placebo, and are designed to answer questions about dosing. This study showed that a five-day regimen is as effective as 10 days—that's important, doctors say, since it could mean shorter stays in the hospital, which could alleviate some of the burden on the health care system. "Of course we will have to wait for the final review of all the data, but it would be very nice to have an antiviral that's efficacious in this terrible illness," says Dr. Aruna Subramanian, a clinical professor of medicine at Stanford and an investigator on the study. "At least we know that we can help patients with this, and that's really the bottom line."

That optimism is still tempered with a sizable amount of caution, since researchers have outstanding and important questions about which patients might benefit most, and when in the course of a COVID-19 illness the drug will work best. The study begun in China, for example, did not find the same positive

Hospital Eleva

April 19
After completing a remdesivir clinical trial, Clark celebrates his discharge to the Rocky *theme*

results among severely ill patients. In that study, people taking the drug did no better than those given a placebo. However, the researchers had to end that trial early because cases started to wane in China and they could not enroll enough people with advanced COVID-19; that means the results—despite being discouraging—may not be statistically significant.

IN ANY CASE, the results from the NIAID study were strong enough for the U.S. FDA to issue the emergency-use authorization so more sick patients might benefit from it. The NIAID study will also continue, but the researchers will offer the drug to all volunteers. "The signal is so strong that we are [no longer] going to offer the placebo in our trial," says Kalil. "In the second part of the trial, we and other sites are going to offer remdesivir to all patients."

The next phase of studies will focus on amplifying remdesivir's benefits by combining it with other medications to address symptoms of the disease. NIAID announced that the first combination will be remdesivir with baricitinib, an anti-inflammatory drug made by Eli Lilly and Co. and approved for treating rheumatoid arthritis. It's an oral medication that could help tamp down the inflammatory reaction responsible for some of the more dire respiratory complications of COVID-19.

Whatever role remdesivir ends up playing in controlling COVID-19, it could be the first approved treatment that helps some coronavirus patients fight their infections. "The trial gave us one answer, and that is that remdesivir helps patients to get better faster," says Mehta. "But one of the great things about science is that when you get one answer, you get 10 more questions."

Those include when remdesivir can be most effective after infection; both the NIAID and Gilead studies hint that giving people the drug earlier in the course of the disease allows them to fight off the infection sooner. Logistical concerns also have to be worked out. Gilead has donated more than 600,000 vials of remdesivir to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which will distribute the drug to state health departments—depending on whether a five-day or a 10-day regimen is used, that's enough to treat anywhere from 55,000 to 100,000 people. The company currently has enough additional stock of the drug to treat 30,000 people. That's not nearly enough to meet the expected demand opened up by the FDA's emergency clearance for the drug.

By the end of May, the company expects to produce enough drug to treat 140,000 people—and by the end of the year, enough to treat more than 1 million.

And then there is the question of remdesivir's price, which industry analysts have estimated could run from as low as tens of dollars for a 10-day course (if provided at cost) to $4,500 (if priced based on market need and effectiveness). As with the drug's development pathway, Gilead's decisions about how to address both supply and pricing will be precedent-setting. A company spokesperson said Gilead was "committed to making remdesivir both accessible and affordable to governments and patients around the world." Under the FDA's emergency-use authorization, the company will work with the U.S. government to prioritize providing the drug to hospitals with the heaviest burden of sick patients.

No other drug in recent medical memory has been tested in the crucible of an ongoing pandemic in the way remdesivir has and will continue to be. How accessible it becomes could set the standard for developing and equitably distributing pandemic treatments for decades to come.

The first person in the U.S. treated with remdesivir will never know if he would have recovered without the drug, but for now, it doesn't matter. He is back home, returning to his normal life. Clark, meanwhile, will eventually learn whether he received remdesivir or a placebo, but he is in no rush to find out. After his two-week quarantine on the second floor of his home was over, Clark got to hug his wife and daughter for the first time in a month. For him, the chance to try something that might have brought him into their arms made all the difference.

COURTESY BILL CLARK (2)

CRISIS IN BRAZIL

The pandemic is ravaging a country already at war with itself **By Ciara Nugent**

A woman prays outside a closed church in Rio de Janeiro on April 23, a state holiday to honor St. George, known for his bravery

PHOTOGRAPH BY SILVIA IZQUIERDO

On May 9, Brazil's death toll from the coronavirus topped 10,000. Instead of marking the grim milestone with an address or a sign of respect for the victims, President Jair Bolsonaro took a spin on a jet ski. Video footage widely circulated on social media shows Brazil's leader grinning as he pulls up to a boat on Brasília's Paranoá Lake where supporters are having a cookout. As he grips onto their boat, Bolsonaro jokes about the "neurosis" of Brazilians worried about the virus. "There's nothing to be done [about it]," he shrugs. "It's madness."

Even by the standards of other right-wing populists who have sought to downplay the COVID-19 pandemic, Bolsonaro's defiance of reality was shocking. From the favelas of densely packed cities like Rio de Janeiro to the remote indigenous communities of the Amazon rain forest, Brazil has emerged as the new global epicenter of the pandemic, with the world's highest rate of transmission and a health system now teetering on the brink of collapse.

Unlike the previous global hot spots—Italy, Spain and the U.S.—Brazil is an emerging economy, with a weaker social safety net that makes it harder for local authorities to persuade people to stay home, and an underfunded health care system. When a particularly severe outbreak struck the city of Manaus, in the Amazon, in late April, hospitals were quickly overrun, leading to a shortage of coffins. On May 17, the mayor of São Paulo, Latin America's largest city, warned that hospitals there would collapse within two weeks if the infection rate continued to rise. The country has confirmed almost 18,000 deaths as of May 19, with a record 1,179 people dying in the preceding 24 hours—the world's second highest daily fatality rate. Epidemiologists say the peak is still weeks away.

For many Brazilian politicians and health experts, much of the blame for the heavy toll lies with the man on the jet ski. Defying social-distancing measures, Bolsonaro has held large rallies with supporters and waged what he calls a "war" against local governors who have tried to lock down their regions. Thanks in part to his example, many Brazilians—between 45% and 60%, depending on the state—are refusing to comply with social-distancing measures, according to cell-phone tracking data. Adding to the chaos, Bolsonaro fired his Health Minister Luiz Mandetta in mid-April when Mandetta he opposed his stance on social distancing. His replacement, a doctor with no political experience, resigned on May 15, after Bolsonaro pushed him to reopen the economy and promote unproven drugs to treat the virus.

The crisis comes as Bolsonaro's administration is crumbling around him, just 16 months into his presidency. On April 24, Sergio Moro, his star Justice Minister, resigned, accusing the President of attempting to interfere with the federal police and sparking a political crisis. The departure of the most popular member of Bolsonaro's Cabinet, widely seen as a moderating force, piles further pressure on the President: he now faces a criminal investigation into Moro's claims that could lead to his impeachment. Bolsonaro's personal approval rating has fallen 9 percentage points since January, according to a May 12 poll, to below 40%. "Bolsonaro's personality is extremely ill suited to a pandemic," says political scientist Gustavo Ri-

PREVIOUS PAGES: AP; THESE PAGES: JOÉDSON ALVES—EPA-EFE/SHUTTERSTOCK

Brazil's far-right President Bolsonaro addresses journalists from outside the Planalto Palace, the official presidential workplace, in Brasília on May 12 as cases of COVID-19 surge across the country

beiro. "He can't unite the country, because his whole modus operandi is based on sowing division."

But Bolsonaro shows no sign of reversing course—and the crisis in Brazil is poised to deteriorate even further, leaving epidemiologists, humanitarians and regional leaders aghast. "The President is co-responsible for many COVID deaths," says Arthur Virgílio Neto, the mayor of Manaus, who watched his city overtaken by the virus in late April. "With irresponsible, almost delinquent preaching, he encourages people to take to the streets. He has pushed many people to their deaths."

BOLSONARO ROSE TO POWER in 2018 by exploiting a period of intense anger at mainstream politicians and unprecedented polarization between the left and the right. A landmark corruption investigation, dubbed Car Wash, had exposed a breathtaking network of graft among Brazil's political and business elites. Bolsonaro barreled into that situation as a political outsider, supposedly immune to the corrupt structures of large parties. An isolated figure in the capital, Brasília, he joined the right-wing Social Liberal Party to run for President, only to leave it after taking office. Upon assuming the presidency, he burnished his anticorruption credentials by appointing Moro, the popular lead Car Wash judge, as his Justice Minister.

The President presented himself as a maverick, willing to speak truths on issues that divide Brazil:

praising the military dictatorship that led the country for two decades in the 20th century, promoting the use of force by police officers, railing against so-called gender ideology, and disdaining environmental protections for the Amazon rain forest and the rights of indigenous communities, which he says hold back Brazil's agricultural sector.

In his willingness to say the unsayable and to take on the pillars of the establishment, Bolsonaro took his cues from the U.S. President—so much so that international media nicknamed him the Trump of the Tropics. Over his first 16 months in office, Bolsonaro determinedly fanned the flames of Brazil's culture wars—sometimes literally. Deforestation in the Amazon rain forest last year surged 85% from 2018, as the President slashed regulations and enforcement meant to prevent land grabbers from setting fire to the forest to clear it for farming. When the international community pressured Brazil's government to slow the destruction, Bolsonaro responded by telling Angela Merkel to "reforest Germany."

But Bolsonaro's sense of impunity may have sowed the seeds for his eventual downfall. In the early hours of April 24, Bolsonaro removed the chief of the federal police, Maurício Valeixo, writing in his official decision that Valeixo had asked to step down. Hours later, Moro resigned as Justice Minister. He accused Bolsonaro of firing Valeixo in order to replace him with a lackey who would illegally feed him confidential information, and later said the President had also attempted to replace the regional head of the police in Rio de Janeiro state, where two of Bolsonaro's sons are under investigation. Bolsonaro denies any wrongdoing and has referred to Moro as "Judas."

> 'BOLSONARO'S PERSONALITY IS EXTREMELY ILL SUITED TO A PANDEMIC. HIS WHOLE MODUS OPERANDI IS BASED ON SOWING DIVISION.'

Moro is more cautious in criticizing the President. Speaking to TIME from a gray hotel room in Brasília, the former judge chooses his words carefully. "There is a difficulty in facing the pandemic in Brazil due to the President's negationist position. That's obvious," he says, adding that he felt uncomfortable being part of a government led by a President who has trivialized the virus. "But my focus is on the rule of law." He says the President's alleged interventions with the police were the last straw in "a whole scenario that has unfolded over the last year ... that showed that this new government was not fulfilling its promises to fight corruption and strengthen institutions."

The overlapping controversies of Bolsonaro's handling of COVID-19 and Moro's dramatic departure have begun to sap the President's support. A survey published May 12 by pollster CNT/MDA found the President's personal approval rating fell to 39.2% from 47.8% in January, as disapproval rose to 55.4% from 47.0%. But Bolsonaro's radical base, which includes evangelical Christians, the military and the agriculture sector, remains strong, says Rodrigo Soares, a professor of Brazilian public policy at Columbia University. "The President is [doubling down] to appeal to his core supporters, who would be displeased if he took a technocratic approach and listened to public-health experts. That's not how he got where he is."

The same might be said of Trump, who has at times taken an approach to the coronavirus as cavalier as Bolsonaro's. Both men have sowed confusion over the seriousness of the disease. Both have promoted unproven drugs as treatments for COVID-19, despite warnings of their serious side effects. In March, Bolsonaro visited Trump in the White House—a trip that ousted Health Minister Mandetta later described to CNN as "a corona trip" because several members of Bolsonaro's team tested positive for the virus afterward.

Yet while Trump leads the richest country in the world, Bolsonaro leads an emerging market with one of the world's highest rates of inequality. Health care access is patchy for millions of people, and fewer in Brazil than in the U.S. have the conditions necessary to work from home. Miguel Nicolelis, one of the most respected scientists in Brazil, who is coordinating a committee for northeastern states to track the virus's spread, says the situation is still worsening. "Despite the very serious problems in the U.S., the exponential curve of cases and deaths in Brazil suggests we are not even close to our peak yet."

IN APRIL, VANDA ORTEGA WITOTO, a nurse technician, began monitoring the chief of her indigenous community. Messias Martins Moreira, 53, of the Kokama people, had a fever that wouldn't let up, which Ortega believed was COVID-19. There is no health center in Parque das Tribos, their remote community of 700 families on the banks of the Tarumã-Açu River in the Amazon. At first, Martins didn't want to go to a hospital in the nearby city of Manaus, saying he would rely on traditional medicine. "[By the time] he realized there was no other way, he couldn't breathe," Ortega says. He died on May 14.

Brazil's 800,000 indigenous people, many of whom live in remote parts of the vast Amazon rain forest, now find themselves particularly vulnerable to the pandemic. Joenia Wapichana, the country's only indigenous member of Congress, has warned that the communities' isolation and lack of health and sanitation infrastructure could turn the corona-

VIDAS
INDÍGENAS
IMPORTAM

Nurse technician Vanda Ortega Witoto, 32, takes care of a patient in Parque das Tribos, an indigenous community near Manaus, the capital of Brazil's northern Amazonas state

RICARDO OLIVEIRA—AFP/GETTY IMAGES

virus into "another genocide" for indigenous people. The first occurred when the Portuguese arrived in Brazil in the 1500s, carrying diseases and staging violent takeovers of land that wiped out most of the more than 3 million indigenous people living there.

And all over Brazil, there are vulnerable communities. Roughly 11 million people live in Brazil's favelas, shantytowns often on the outskirts of major cities. Cramped homes, limited water infrastructure and unsafe working conditions have left millions of favela residents struggling to stem the spread of the virus.

With case numbers yet to peak, health systems around the country are on the edge of collapse. In São Paulo, 90% of ICU beds are full. In the state of Pernambuco, where ICUs are 96% full, a shortage of ventilators has forced doctors to choose not to treat some cases, and some hospitals are treating patients in hallways. In Rio de Janeiro state, the waiting list for a hospital bed topped 1,000 in the second week of May; some emergency facilities opened a few weeks ago are already over 90% full.

The economic impact of the coronavirus is also likely to carry a heavy human toll. Even as lockdowns have been only partly implemented, the economy is projected to shrink 5% in 2020—which would be the deepest recession since records began in 1900. Incomes have already fallen sharply among the majority of the population, who cannot work from home, and particularly among the roughly half the workforce who earn a few hundred dollars a month in the informal sector. Humanitarian groups say a hunger crisis is in the cards for the quarter of the population who live in poverty. The government announced an estimated $30 billion package to funnel emergency cash to those who cannot work.

The impact of this is especially unpredictable in Brazil, where almost every economic crisis since its return to democracy in 1985 has been followed by a sharp political shift. Ribeiro, the political scientist, says it is "very, very" possible that any such shift in the near future would be accompanied by social unrest. "People are as radicalized as I have ever seen. And now we're going to an economic crisis like I've never seen in my lifetime," he says. "I don't see a rosy future ahead of us."

Bolsonaro has a not-so-secret weapon that could help him ride out the storm. A former army captain, the President has forged a tight alliance with the military. Active and former military officials currently hold nine of the 22 Cabinet positions, and they appear to be closing ranks around Bolsonaro, which analysts say might shield him from impeachment.

The President may yet survive, but many of his people will not. Carlos Machado, coordinator of the observatory against COVID-19 at the country's epidemiological institute, Fiocruz, sees the makings of an extremely dangerous situation for Brazilians in the current moment. "When public-health emergencies overlap with extremely precarious political and economic crises, it can create a humanitarian crisis," he says. "Brazil is heading there." —*With reporting by* FLÁVIA MILHORANCE/RIO DE JANEIRO

30TH STREET MEN'S SHELTER

DUTY FOR THE DEAD

THE SOLEMN CHALLENGE OF COLLECTING THE BODIES OF NEW YORK'S CORONAVIRUS VICTIMS

BY W.J. HENNIGAN

PHOTOGRAPHS BY NATALIE KEYSSAR FOR TIME

A group of U.S. service members leave a medical examiner's disaster morgue on May 2 to head to their hotels for the night

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MUCH OF NEW YORK CITY HAS BEEN IDLE SINCE the coronavirus lockdown was declared two months ago, but not the South Brooklyn Marine Terminal, an 88-acre shipping and distribution hub built in the 1960s on the east side of the city's inner harbor, opposite the Statue of Liberty. Day and night, trucks back up to loading bays while 130 workers scamper between three football-field-size warehouses, waving in drivers and inspecting their freight.

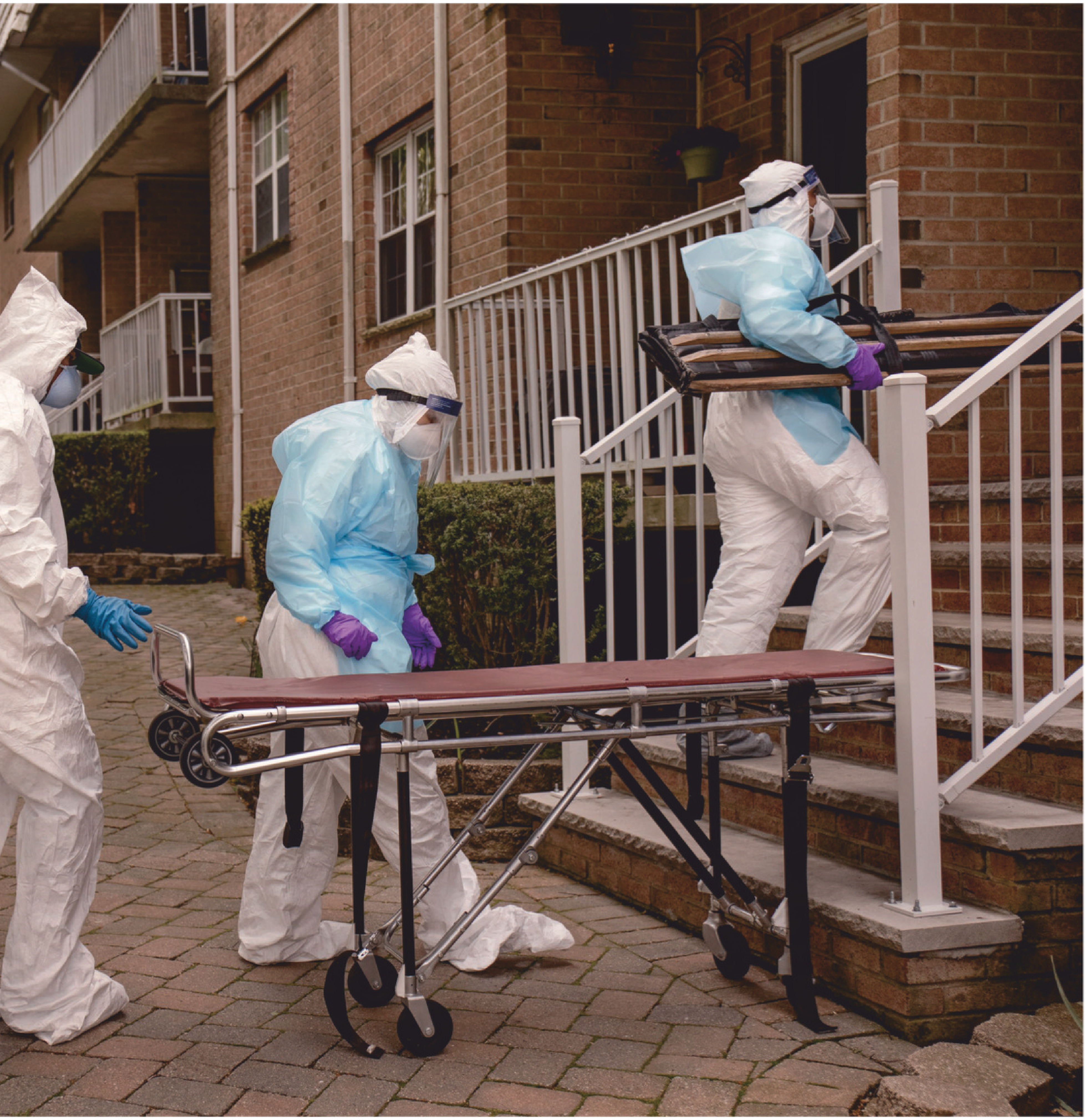
The traffic here is no longer in goods arriving from around the world, however. It is in the dead.

The corpses arrive from across the city. Since mid-April, the bodies of New Yorkers have been pulled from homes, hospitals and alleyways, zipped up in black body bags and brought here for processing. Some died hours earlier; others have been gone for days, or even weeks. One by one, they are examined and entered into a computer tracking system. Then they are pushed up a ramp to a loading dock and stacked on wooden racks with 90 other corpses inside one of dozens of 53-ft. refrigerated tractor trailers set at 37°F to 39°F for storage.

The makeshift morgue is just one stop in a citywide cavalcade bearing an unfathomable number of bodies. Since March 14, COVID-19 has killed some 20,000 in New York City; at the height of the pandemic on April 7, two dozen people were dying every hour. But those figures don't capture the competing challenges that the scale of death has created on the ground.

The first is logistical: How do you handle that many dead bodies in a safe and hygienic manner? The pandemic has overwhelmed the network of funeral parlors, mortuaries and morgues designed to process the dead. At the worst moments, hospitals loaded corpses onto refrigerated trucks with forklifts. Medical examiners set two-week limits to claim bodies before they were sent in pine boxes to paupers' graves on Hart Island. Funeral homes

At one point, two dozen people were dying every hour in New York City. At a Staten Island home on May 8, National Guard and medical examiner's personnel arrive to collect a body



Senior Airman Steve Ollennu, left, with his National Guard team. A May 2 removal call took them to Lincoln Medical Center in the Bronx, the hospital where Ollennu was born

stacked caskets in spare rooms, hallways and private chapels. Crematories' brick ovens collapsed because of overuse.

The harder challenge is psychological. How do you maintain your humanity in the face of so much dehumanizing death? Amid the crisis, the usually discreet network of humans entrusted with caring for our dead and helping us mourn has struggled. Reinforcements from the National Guard have been called in, with part-time soldiers like Senior Airman Steve Ollennu pulled off his job installing communications equipment to retrieve bodies as grieving family members say their last goodbyes. City officials like Frank DePaolo, who handled the dead after 9/11 and now oversees mortuary operations for the chief medical examiner's office, are working 12-hour shifts trying to ensure a modicum of respect for those brought into the disaster morgues. Funeral directors like John D'Arienzo search for small symbolic steps to honor the deceased in rituals so anonymous and restrictive, they are no longer called wakes or visitations but rather "identification ceremonies."

TIME spent more than a month observing and traveling and speaking with more than three dozen people in New York City's procession of death, gaining access to every step of the journey from body collection to mortuary inspection to burial. What emerged is a picture of professionals trying to balance the grueling practicalities of processing hundreds of bodies per day with the compassionate imperative to honor the deceased and offer survivors the chance to mourn and some semblance of closure. The virus has kept us from saying goodbye at a hospital bedside or finding peace at a funeral. "We don't do this work for the dead," says DePaolo. "We do it for the living."

THE CALL FOR HELP comes in at 3:56 p.m. on May 2. The dispatcher with the medical examiner's office tells Senior Airman Ollennu, 32, of the 105th Airlift Wing of the New York Air National Guard that a "removal" is needed at a retirement home in Flushing, Queens. Twenty minutes later, Ollennu and his two team members arrive at the rear of the 10-story red brick building and park near the service elevator. Jumping to the pavement, they shed their hats and camouflage jackets and pull on white hooded

Battalion leaders at their base of operations on May 8 at the medical examiner's disaster morgue in Manhattan; for the pandemic, four temporary morgues were added to the city's five permanent facilities

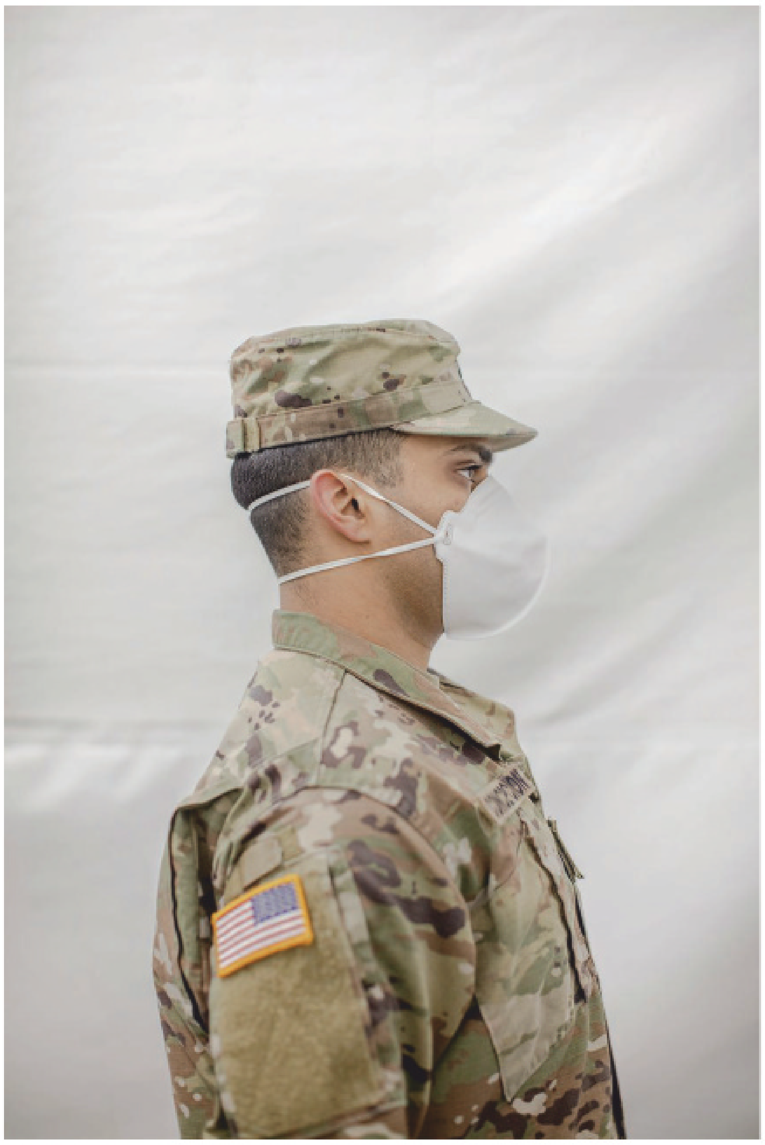
jumpsuits, blue latex gloves and white plastic coverings over their combat boots.

It is a spectacle for the New Yorkers enjoying the 72°F day. A man walking a white and brown shih tzu stops midstride when he spots the troops looking like spacemen. He promptly moves to the other side of the street, watching as Ollennu and his group disappear into the service elevator with a stretcher. Wordlessly, the collection team heads to the basement morgue, where a staffer points a thermometer at each of their necks to ensure they aren't running a fever. The body of an elderly woman awaits them. After a medical examiner's official confirms her identity, the troops zip her into a body bag, then place her in a second bag to ensure no bodily fluids escape.

The team wheels the corpse back the way they came, through the basement, into the elevator, out the service entrance to the back of the medical examiner's truck, where they gently secure the woman's body. Standing outside the truck, the troops ball up their protective equipment and toss it into a bucket marked BIO-HAZARD. Then they take turns spraying themselves with disinfectant.

For two months, 30 three-person teams of National Guard members have joined officials from the medical examiner's office in this ritual. Many of the troops had never so much as touched a dead body before. Now they see more corpses in a week than many soldiers see in a nine-month combat stint. It's not just the COVID cases. They've had to help on all New York City deaths: picking up a suicide jumper off the pavement; holding their breaths to haul out two-week-old corpses from hoarders' apartments; and tiptoeing around blood spatter at murder scenes. "Once you see it, you can't unsee it," Ollennu says. "You can't unsmell it either." The National Guard has a chaplain and behavioral-health specialists available if the troops need to talk about the scenes they deal with all day.

Ollennu's military occupation is actually to install and maintain communications equipment. He's had to learn body removal on the job. Apartment buildings are a challenge. Hallways are often narrow. Sometimes the elevator is broken, forcing the team to haul a lifeless body down multiple flights of stairs. "It's hard when you have to handle a body that's been decomposing for an extended amount of time because the body is weak,



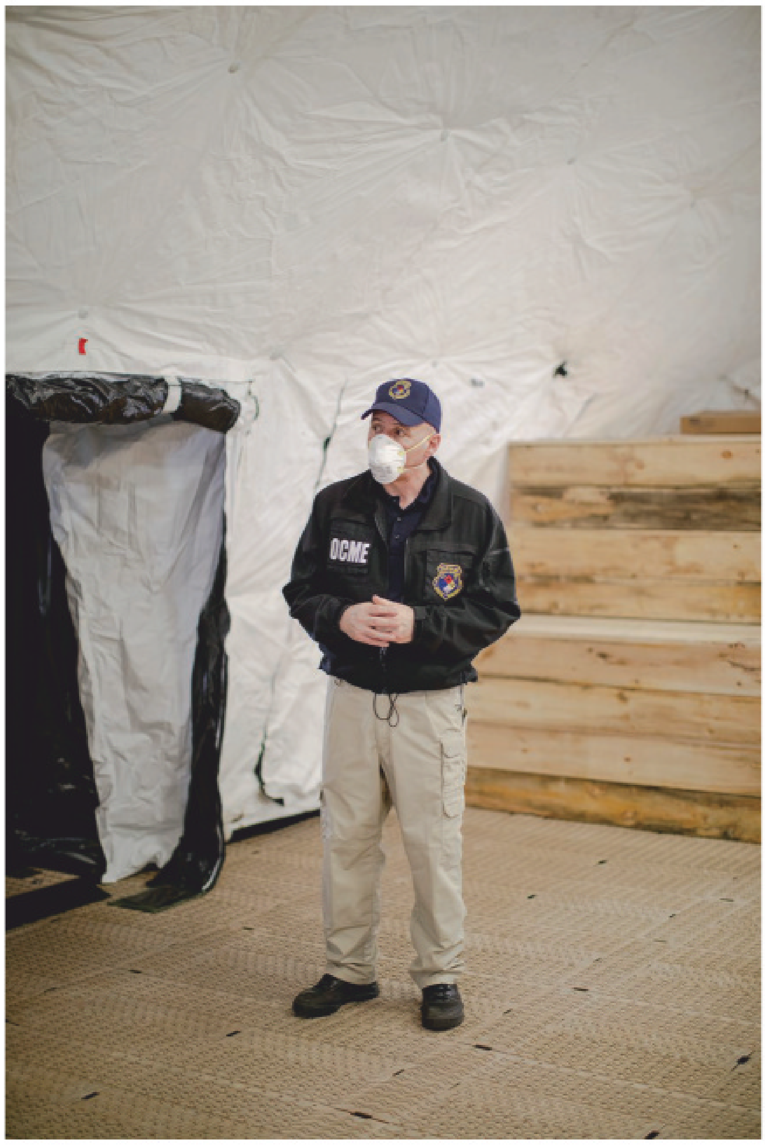
JONATHAN CONCEPCION
PRIVATE FIRST CLASS

GW
GREEN-WOOD
JOHN

JANUSZ KARKOS
GREEN-WOOD CEMETERY GRAVEDIGGER

BARBARA SAMPSON
CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER

RAMON JONES
MASTER SERGEANT



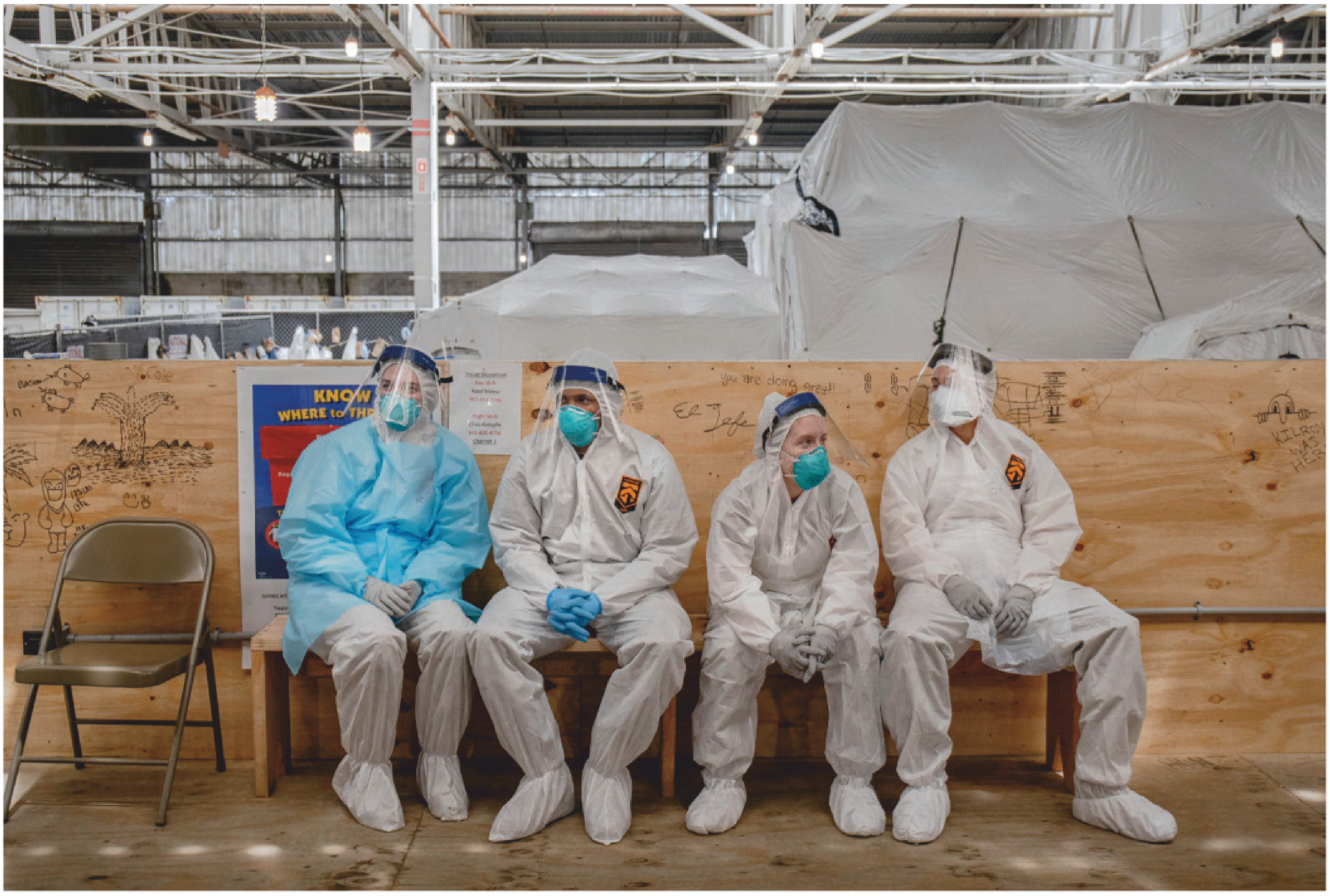
FRANK DEPAOLO
DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOR FORENSIC OPERATIONS

OLLENNU
US AIR FORCE

STEVE OLLENNU
SENIOR AIRMAN

MUHAMMED QURESHI
CITY MORTUARY TECHNICIAN

NARALY GARCIA
SPECIALIST



it's brittle in some areas, the skin is ready to peel off," Ollennu says. "You try to handle it in a respectful manner, so the survivors can see that their loved ones weren't just manhandled and thrown in a bag."

Grieving families are often present, which adds another complexity. It's often the last time relatives are able to see their father, mother, son or daughter. Many have a deep fear that their loved one will get lost among the thousands of corpses held by the medical examiner's office. The team reassures them that they maintain a number-coded tracking system, so their family member or friend won't be misplaced.

In one sense, Ollennu is doing this for his neighbors. He grew up in the city. His father, a taxi driver born in Ghana, still lives in Harlem. Sometimes he collects the dead from Lincoln Medical Center, the hospital where he was born.

It was dusk by the time Ollennu's team dropped off the last body of their shift at the makeshift morgue. As they pulled in, members of the medical examiner's office checked their victim and took down her name, birth date and other information. Nearby, other workers wheeled unidentified bodies to the refrigerated truck dedicated to those who arrive unclaimed.

Soldiers from the 54th Quartermaster Company at the South Brooklyn Marine Terminal, which also served as a disaster morgue after the 9/11 attacks; by mid-May, COVID-19 had killed at least five times as many New Yorkers

THE SOUTH BROOKLYN Marine Terminal became a massive crisis morgue thanks to Frank DePaolo, 60. His COVID-19 response plan drew on his experience coordinating operations following the 2001 terrorist attacks at the World Trade Center. The warehouse complex was previously used to sift through debris to find remains of missing 9/11 victims. Another COVID-19 morgue in Manhattan, in an area formally known as Memorial Park, also held the remains of victims in the attacks.

DePaolo, who worked as a paramedic before climbing the ranks of the medical examiner's office, even lured back veterans from the 9/11 emergency response who had left. John Scrivani, 48, retired from New York City disaster-response management about a decade ago to enjoy a quieter life in Virginia. DePaolo persuaded him to temporarily leave his job with the Virginia department of transportation to help coordinate the recovery and transfer of remains from hospitals. "When I saw what was going on, sitting at home wasn't an option," Scrivani says, standing on a morgue loading dock as soldiers, firefighters and emergency personnel scuttle back and forth.

Refrigerated tractor trailers outside the marine terminal, generators roaring

Over the past two months, the medical examiner's office has transformed into a hub-and-spoke organization for the collection, transport and storage of corpses. It has installed more than 100 refrigerated trailers outside 58 hospitals in all five boroughs. A planning team plots out response calls in order of urgency. A fueling truck is sent around to fill up each refrigerated trailer once a day. All of it happens 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The core mission is to vastly expand the city's storage capacity, easing the burden on undertakers and gravediggers who are backlogged with bodies and inundated with requests. Before the pandemic, the medical examiner's traditional morgues could store up to 900 bodies. Capacity is now at least five times that.

On a recent Saturday, standing in front of more than two dozen refrigerated trailers holding hundreds of dead New Yorkers, DePaolo tried to find words to express what he is experiencing. The afternoon sun reflected off the trailers' white panels. A breeze carried the whir of generators and the scent of gasoline. "People have no idea this is going on," DePaolo says above the din. "It's like another world."

The logistical challenges are complicated by emotional ones. DePaolo is leading an effort that has no contemporary precedent; the number of dead far surpasses the casualties seen on modern battlefields. And the 12-hour shifts are taking a toll as all 800 medical-examiner employees, 350 U.S. troops and 75 federal personnel assigned to the office work at their limits to handle all the bodies. "People will work seven days a week if you don't tell them to stay home," DePaolo says. "We know from past experience that's not healthy."

THE D'ARIENZO FUNERAL HOME in Brooklyn has never had long-term refrigeration capacity for the bodies it takes in, and for 86 years that wasn't a problem. "I do about 100 funerals a year, which mathematically works out to about seven a month," says John D'Arienzo, 58, the third-generation director. "I did 60 funerals in April."

He's done what he can to free up space inside. The furniture in a small, dimly lit chapel was removed to hold caskets, stacks of long cardboard boxes known as cremation containers, and cartons of much needed plastic protective equipment provided by the city. He had to use a spare room in back, behind the

A collection team removes remains from a residence in the Bronx on May 8. Twelve-hour shifts have become routine

NO PARKING FIRE ZONE

coffee-colored curtains in the visitation room, as an emergency space for up to six bodies. He sets fans and a cooling system to maintain 50°F, which isn't cold enough to keep the bodies from decomposing after a day or so.

D'Arienzo has worked to maintain a lifelong pledge, passed on from his father and grandfather, to help every mourning family that enters his front door. But that was before COVID-19. Now, most days, he keeps the door locked and his phone off the hook. "Worst thing I've ever done in my life, as a person and a funeral director, was to tell a family I couldn't help them," he says. "And there were days I was telling 30 to 35 families, 'I can't help you.'"

As president of the Metropolitan Funeral Directors Association, D'Arienzo hears from undertakers across the city. "Everyone is overwhelmed," he says. "Everyone is at full capacity. Everyone is trying to service anybody and everyone that they can."

Even the people he can help are not able to mourn their loss normally. Limits on public gatherings compound the pain of grief-stricken families, who must cover their mouths and noses with masks and refrain from touching one another or the deceased's body. The polished dark wooden chairs in D'Arienzo's carpeted visitation room have been separated 6 ft. apart and pushed to the oak-paneled walls.

Rather than a traditional hours-long visitation service with flowers and clergy, funeral directors are holding "identification services" so a handful of immediate family members can say a prayer or two. It is a ceremony without catharsis. Some New York City funeral homes have arranged livestreams on platforms like Skype or Facebook.

The struggle to keep up has turned ugly at some facilities. On April 29, at the Andrew T. Cleckley Funeral Home in the Flatlands section of Brooklyn, police found four rented trucks parked on a busy street with about 50 decomposing bodies inside. The discovery was made after a neighbor reported a foul odor and dripping fluids coming from the unrefrigerated vehicles. "I have no idea in the world how any funeral home could let this happen," Mayor Bill de Blasio told reporters.

But it's not that easy with every person trained to handle the dead in New York City overwhelmed. Green-Wood Cemetery sprawls out over 478 acres of rolling hills in west Brooklyn. Burials have jumped threefold, to as many as 69 per week. "In my 48 years here, I've never seen anything like it," says cemetery president Richard Moylan, 65, who started cutting grass on the grounds as a summer job in 1972.

Moylan's gravediggers wear face masks and hazmat suits for confirmed coronavirus victims. "The family has to stay away from us," says Janusz Karkos, 43, who was raking soil over the newly covered grave of a COVID-19 victim. "Things are very different for burials. So few people, so little ceremony." He motioned toward a single bouquet of red and white roses that says UNCLE and BROTHER. “Usually, the number of flowers on a grave like this would come up to our knees,” he says. “But there’s no wake, no funeral, so no flowers.”

Faced with limits on funeral attendance and social-distancing restrictions at grave sites, many families are opting instead for cremation. At Green-Wood, the number has tripled to more than 150 each week. New York State regulators realized in early April that demand for cremations would rise, so they loosened restrictions to allow crematories to operate around the clock. All five of Green-Wood’s cremation ovens now burn up to 1,800°F for 16 hours a day. (The remaining eight hours are needed for recovery time.) The overuse has caused two of the ovens to break.

All four city crematories have backlogs stretching to a month. None has ever had a wait list before. Funeral directors have resorted to driving bodies to crematories in Vermont, Pennsylvania, Connecticut—anywhere that’s not overwhelmed.

WHAT DOES THE WORK of Ollennu, DePaolo, D’Arienzo and Moylan amount to in the end? In the most basic sense, it is about preserving public health. At a time when strangers are told not to come within arm’s distance of one another, these men are taking a risk by handling the dead. But in a moral sense, they have accomplished something more.

Fabian Reyes, 49, called his daughter Fabiola’s cell phone in the early afternoon of March 31, but she couldn’t understand him. “He couldn’t breathe,” says Fabiola, 28. “I just told him don’t give up.” Then her phone pinged with a text message.

“I won’t make it from this one please take care this virus is serious and is gonna wipe out a half the population, take care of your younger siblings please,” the message read. It was sent at 2:43 p.m. on March 31. Fabian died two weeks later.

It took 24 more days for Fabiola Reyes to obtain her father’s ashes. A Catholic from a large and devout Ecuadorian family, she wanted to hold a traditional wake, funeral and burial for her dad. But once it was clear that they wouldn’t be able to gather together, much less have a formal ceremony, the family settled on cremation. Finally, on May 7, they received Fabian’s ashes and convened a handful of family members outside St. Sylvester Church in Brooklyn for a short blessing ceremony.

The ritual, with attendees masked and 6 ft. apart, was a far cry from what the family wanted. But it was something: a moment to honor and remember Fabian Reyes, whose remains had been borne to the service by people on the front lines. In one of the darkest periods in our history, they have carried their fellow Americans with quiet dignity. As Ollennu put it after a long shift, “We try to treat everyone like they were our own family member.” ◻

Social-distancing regulations have made funerals lonely and rare. On May 4, Janusz Karkos tends the grave of a COVID-19 victim at Brooklyn's Green-Wood Cemetery

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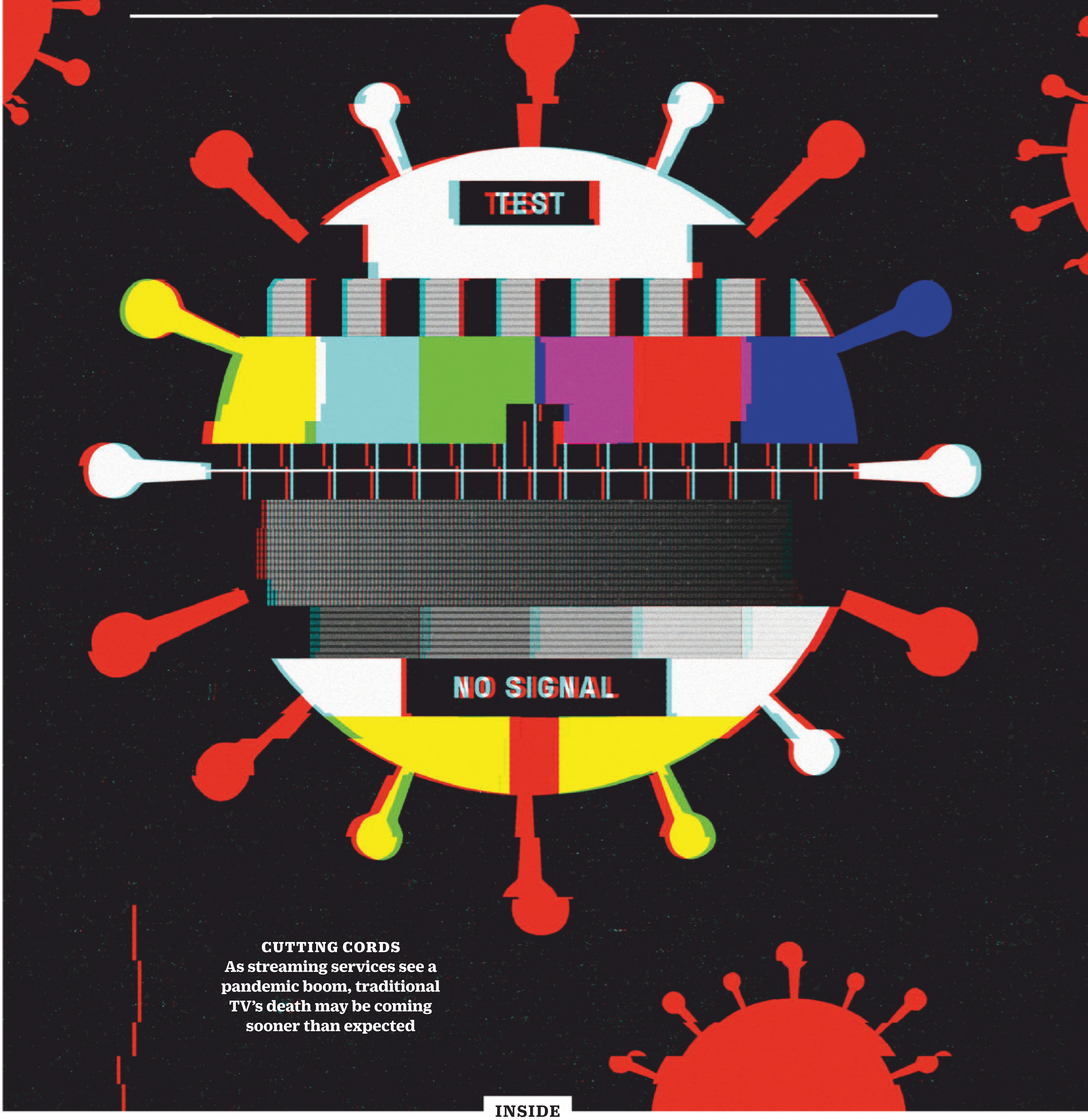


CUTTING CORDS
As streaming services see a pandemic boom, traditional TV's death may be coming sooner than expected

INSIDE

A NOTORIOUS HEIST GETS THE MINISERIES TREATMENT

THE AUTHOR OF SWEETBITTER RETURNS WITH A BUZZY MEMOIR

THE ALLEGED ABUSES OF A HIP-HOP MOGUL

ILLUSTRATION BY THE HEADS OF STATE FOR TIME

ESSAY

How the virus attacks traditional TV

By Judy Berman

On a recent evening, out of a combination of professional obligation and morbid curiosity, I sat down on my couch and turned on my TV to watch celebrities … sit on their own couches to watch TV. That is literally all that happens on *Celebrity Watch Party,* which now occupies a full hour of Fox's Thursday lineup. Famous faces including the Osbournes, Tyra Banks and Rob Lowe stare into their screens—and out at viewers who get to observe them cooing over, say, an elephant doc narrated by Meghan Markle. Just like us!

As reality TV goes, *Watch Party* is gentle enough. It doesn't traffic in public humiliation like *Love Is Blind* or inspire virulent misanthropy like *Summer House.* Yet it manages to offend through sheer dullness. The highlight of the premiere comes when a listless Ozzy observes the unmasking of pop-classical phenom Jackie Evancho on *The Masked Singer* and slurs, "Who the f-ck was that?" Shot remotely and infused with the half-glib, half-naive "We're all in this together, never mind that I'm quarantining in a mansion with live-in staff" spirit that has pervaded celebrity-driven entertainment since March, *Watch Party* may be TV's most pathetic response yet to the COVID-19 crisis.

After years of audience attrition, linear television was thrust into chaos when social-distancing measures halted production on most shows. Suddenly, not only scripted series but also the sports, talk shows and reality programming that have kept broadcast and cable channels in business amid the streaming revolution were canceled. While streaming services have profited from a nation stuck at home, many traditional networks are absorbing yet another ratings blow. The future of real-time TV has looked bleak for quite some time. But, for a long list of reasons, coronavirus appears to be accelerating the decline.

ALTHOUGH THE BIG FIVE broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox and the CW) have been bleeding viewers since cable got serious about scripted originals in the 2000s, it's only in the past few years that the long-term future of television has started to click into place. Even as the volume of new content keeps increasing, the field of competitors is contracting. And as media ownership has consolidated—with Disney buying 21st Century Fox, while Discovery swallowed Food Network, HGTV and more in a Scripps acquisition—each conglomerate is amassing the catalog and intellectual property to support a stand-alone streaming platform.

Family values: the Osbournes (from left, Sharon, Kelly and Ozzy) hunker down to watch and be watched

Hence the second wave of subscription services that arrived in November with Apple TV+ and Disney+, the latter of which is coasting on its Marvel, *Star Wars* and family-friendly animated library. In April, the service reached 50 million paid users, having added more than 21 million in the previous two months alone. While COVID-19 likely played some role in the spike, Disney+ did launch across Europe and in India during that period. Stateside viewers also have the option of bundling it with ESPN+ and Hulu, which caters to adults, for a package comparable in price with Netflix.

Not that Netflix seems hurt by the competition. Streaming has benefited from our quarantine-induced boredom. The New York *Times* reported that the number of American households with at least one streaming subscription jumped by 2.5 million, to 74%, in the first quarter of 2020. Netflix gained nearly 16 million subscribers during the same period—a new record. The company warned shareholders that the rapid growth would probably end with the stay-at-home orders. Still, it's notable that the sign-ups came despite Netflix losing some of its most popular licensed titles. (*Friends* left in December.) Years of content churn have given the service independence; now it can attract subscribers on the strength of a library it actually owns.

FOX

That library should also discourage defection to new and upcoming subscription sites from media superpowers that are pulling their titles from Netflix. On May 27, WarnerMedia will debut HBO Max, with a handful of day-one originals alongside old and new series from HBO, Turner and Warner Bros. (among them: *Friends*); movies will range from *Casablanca* to DC Comics superhero blockbusters. Peacock, from NBCUniversal, launches July 15. Headlining its similar mix are streaming staples *Parks and Recreation, 30 Rock* and, when it leaves Netflix in 2021, *The Office.*

This was always going to be a big year for the "streaming wars," implicit in which was the gradual exodus from traditional TV. But quarantine has stoked viewers' hunger for content and hastened their adoption of nonlinear platforms. Shaped by the rhythms of weekdays and weekends, school and work outside the home—routines that no longer exist for many of us—real-time TV schedules suddenly seem absurd. In the time of coronavirus, the only way to watch is to binge.

Braced though they might've been for a bumpy year, broadcast and cable could never have anticipated what's befallen them since March. Live and quick-turnaround programming was the first crisis. Talk shows shut down. Reality shows that aired live episodes, like *American Idol,* were also out of luck. Basketball, baseball and hockey had their seasons delayed indefinitely or cut short; the Olympics were postponed.

NOT ALL of linear TV's attempts to adapt have been as feeble as *Celebrity Watch Party*—a ratings flop as well as a creative one. *Idol, Saturday Night Live* and many talk shows, from *The View* to Showtime's *Desus & Mero,* have returned as lo-fi video chats. Live-action series like NBC's *The Blacklist* and Pop's *One Day at a Time* are turning to animation. And a raft of socially distant all-star events—a *Parks and Rec* reunion on NBC, a pair of Disney sing-alongs on ABC—have seen networks playing their (or their corporate parents') hits, to relatively large audiences. News shows are, for obvious reasons, more vital than ever.

> **'We don't anticipate moving the schedule around much, and certainly not in 2020.'**
>
> **TED SARANDOS,** Netflix CCO, about the streamer's backlog

But more problems lie ahead. COVID-related production delays have already postponed premieres, like the fourth season of FX's *Fargo.* As the pandemic persists, broadcasters have had to slash new series orders. Fox recently unveiled a fall schedule heavy on reality and animation, with *L.A.'s Finest*—a middling police procedural imported from cable provider Spectrum—filling out its scripted lineup.

Streamers have also halted production, of course, but their release models build in more wiggle room. They don't rely on ad sales, premiere weeks or the jigsaw puzzle that is prime-time scheduling. Besides, Netflix content boss Ted Sarandos announced in April's quarterly earnings call that not only is shooting completed on most of this year's shows, but "we're actually pretty deep into our 2021 slate."

As much of a headache as this all must be for network execs, it isn't necessarily bad for the corporations behind them. Peacock parent NBCUniversal's holdings include NBC and its cable-news offshoots, along with cable channels including USA, Telemundo and Bravo. Warner has HBO, Cinemax, CNN, TBS, TNT and more—plus content from the CW, jointly owned with ViacomCBS. Viacom has been among the slowest to get its streaming strategy in order, relying on à la carte offerings; now the company is scrambling to consolidate its catalog. Even Fox, which retained its broadcast and news channels in the Disney deal, acquired ad-supported streaming platform Tubi in April, indicating an investment in the technology.

Smaller cable businesses have seen mixed results in the past few months. The relatively highbrow AMC Networks (BBC America, IFC) predicted a steep revenue drop this quarter, but comfort-TV purveyor Discovery Communications is flourishing. In the long run, it's cable and satellite services that seem doomed to lose. Dish Network and Comcast reportedly each lost more than 400,000 subscribers in the year's first quarter; AT&T was down more than a million. Yet even that news is deceptive: Comcast owns NBCUniversal, and AT&T owns WarnerMedia.

The deeper we get into the streaming wars, the clearer it becomes that a few megacorps are destined to control the future of TV—the same ones that have shaped its past and present, for the most part. This holds true whether we're talking about Netflix vs. Disney or paid vs. ad-supported models or broadcast vs. cable vs. streaming. Those that stand to suffer most from this shift are TV's most vulnerable producers and consumers: smaller creators and distributors that don't have the budgets to compete with multinationals, older viewers who may not be adept with technology, families that rely on broadcast because they can't afford pay TV.

In fact, shows like *Celebrity Watch Party* exist on network TV neither solely because of quarantine nor because the corporations behind them are broke or uninspired. They exist because the money, and the companies' attention, is somewhere else. □

Macfadyen takes the hot seat

REVIEW

The other Charles and Diana

On Sept. 10, 2001, Major Charles Ingram ended a squirmy performance on Britain's *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?* by taking the top prize. His wife Diana—really—had previously appeared on the show and was in the studio audience. Producers smelled a rat. The couple and another contestant were arrested on suspicion that they'd conspired to cheat. By the time they went to trial, in 2003, the court of public opinion had long since rendered its guilty verdict.

Adapted by James Graham from his play and directed by Stephen Frears, the three-part drama *Quiz* meanders from *Millionaire*'s late-'90s origins through the legal ordeal. The performances, from a cast of British TV vets, are tops. *Succession* standout Matthew Macfadyen and Sian Clifford *(Fleabag)* are well cast as the Ingrams. He's equal parts stiff and goofy; she's all raw nerves.

Long on exposition and short on insight, the first two episodes are sluggish. *Quiz* might've made a smoother transition to the screen as a feature. But the finale deftly reframes them. Graham is wise to minimize whodunit (if anyone) elements in favor of probing the case's implications about class and the media's power over public opinion.

—*J.B.*

QUIZ *premieres May 31 on AMC*

REVIEW

Parks and animation

By Judy Berman

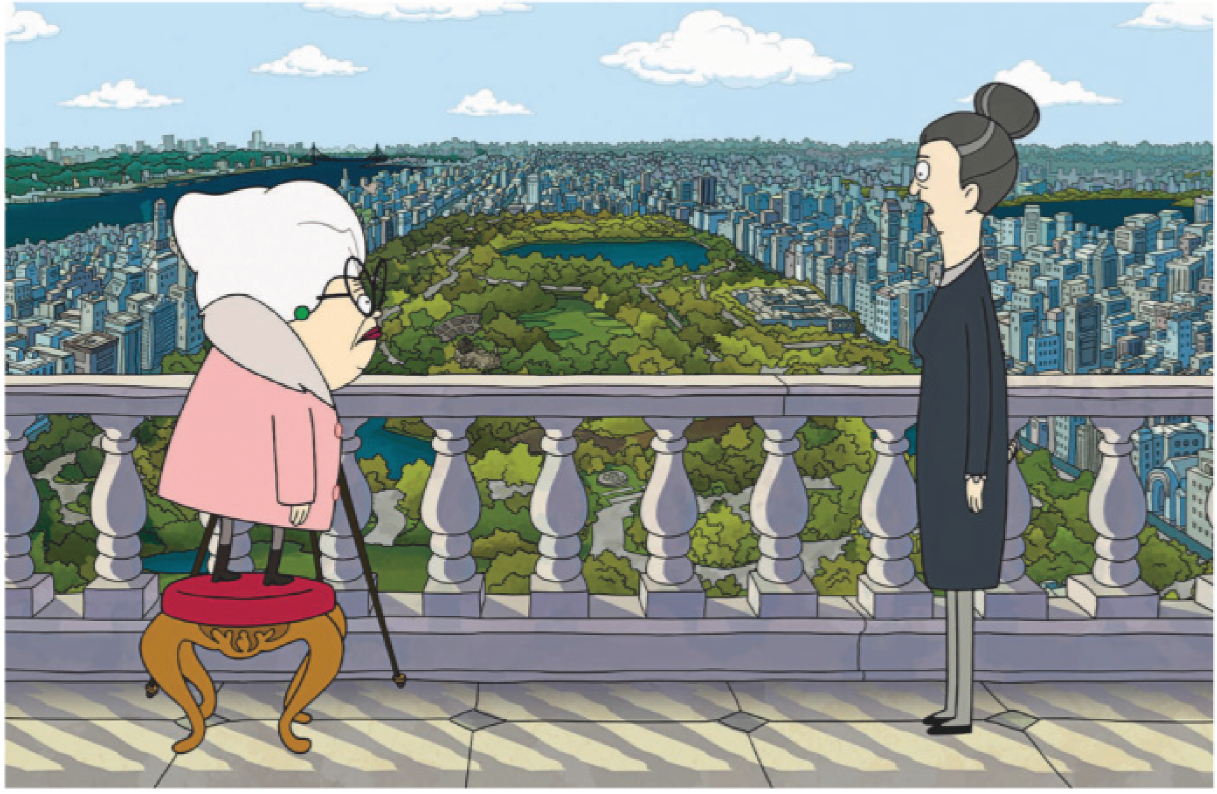
IN THE AGE OF QUARANTINE, URBAN parks are magnets for controversy. Which park activities constitute appropriate social-distancing behavior? Should they be open at all? If you've never lived in a densely populated city, the intensity of these debates might be baffling. But public parks are the pressure valves of any major metropolis—and never more so than when the bars are closed. They make cheek-by-jowl living bearable. Whether you enter the park for a birthday barbecue or just to read a book in the midday sun, you leave feeling like part of a community.

That sense of civic pride suffuses *Central Park,* a delightful Apple TV+ animated comedy created by *Bob's Burgers* team Loren Bouchard and Nora Smith with Josh Gad *(Frozen)*. As in *Burgers,* a family of lovable oddballs does the thankless work that gives their lives meaning. A sweet nerd in head-to-toe khaki, Owen Tillerman (voiced by Leslie Odom Jr.) manages the titular New York landmark, where the family also lives in a scruffy castle. His wife Paige (Kathryn Hahn) writes for the city's "most-left-on-the-subway paper" and longs to move on from fluff pieces to hard news. Their children nurse their own obsessions: comic artist Molly (Kristen Bell) with a certain boy, and her brother Cole (Tituss Burgess) with animals.

Central Park is also a musical, studded with original show tunes that juxtapose heartfelt emotion and bathroom humor. One *Hamilton*-esque rap turns Cole's promise to Owen about a dog he wants to adopt—"When he poops, I'll pick it up"—into a call-and-response line. Gad's busker character is the Greek chorus, opening the series with a lively tribute to the park itself, "an equalizer" where "all rats go to heaven."

There's nothing preachy about the show, which is just as raunchy as *Burgers*. But even before we meet the Tillermans' antagonist Bitsy Brandenham—a real estate tycoon who lives in a penthouse atop a hotel she owns and is given voice, hilariously, by Stanley Tucci—its egalitarian politics is hard to miss. A park where homeless people sleep on benches surrounded by multimillion-dollar dwellings can't help but look like a metaphor. So who better to defend the democratic soul of that public space than a dorky, multiracial middle-class family for whom it is a haven?

CENTRAL PARK *comes to Apple TV+ on May 29*



Bitsy (Tucci) and her henchwoman plot park domination

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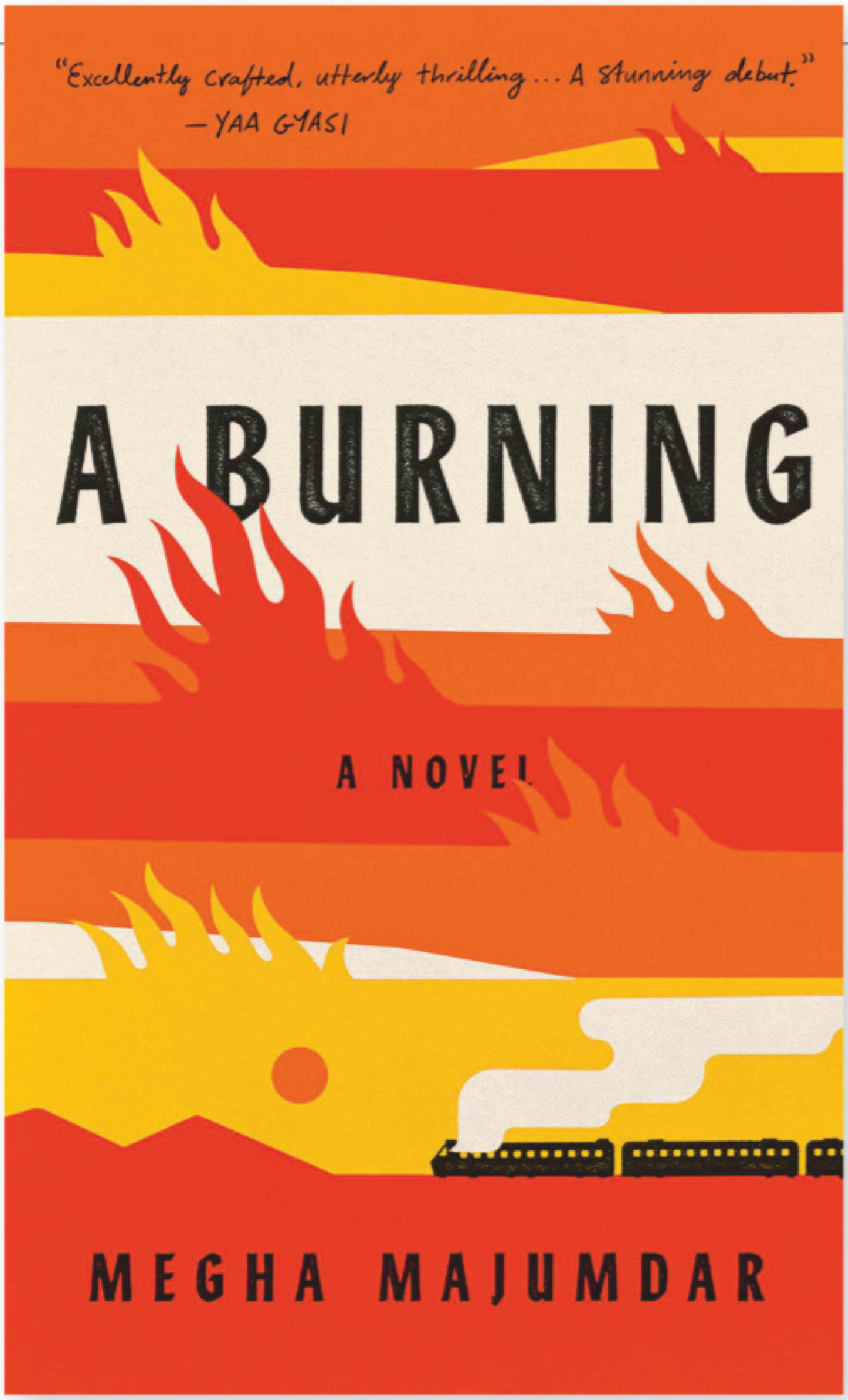
REVIEW

A kaleidoscopic portrait of India

By Naina Bajekal


"Excellently crafted, utterly thrilling . . . A stunning debut."
—YAA GYASI
A BURNING
A NOVEL
MEGHA MAJUMDAR

Majumdar's debut depicts the political tensions of contemporary India

"WRITERS AND POLITICIANS ARE NATURAL rivals," Salman Rushdie wrote in his 1982 essay "Imaginary Homelands." "Both groups try to make the world in their own images; they fight for the same territory. And the novel is one way of denying the official, politicians' version of truth."

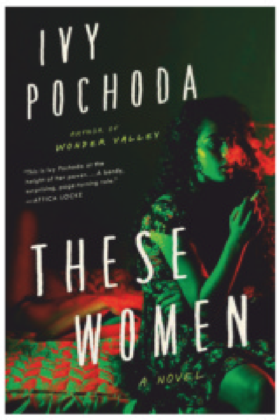
In her captivating debut novel *A Burning,* Megha Majumdar presents a powerful corrective to the political narratives that have dominated in contemporary India. Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, artists and journalists have faced pressure to toe the Hindu nationalist party line. Indian universities have purged "antinationals" from campuses. In a 2015 criminal trial for contempt of court, Booker Prize–winning author Arundhati Roy was accused by a judge of unfairly criticizing "a most tolerant country like India." Meanwhile, in February, the New Delhi police force was widely criticized for standing by as 53 people, most of them Muslim, were killed in riots—the worst religious violence in India for more than a decade.

Majumdar, who grew up in Kolkata and is now an editor in New York City, tackles this turmoil head-on. India's brand of nationalism has its particularities, but readers around the world will recognize the rightward turn charted in *A Burning,* with schools criticized for failing to teach "national feeling" and minority communities seen as "disloyal to the values of this nation." The novel opens with train cars ablaze in an attack that leaves more than a hundred dead. Jivan, a Muslim woman living in a Kolkata slum, posts a careless comment on Facebook criticizing the government and ends up in jail, accused of aiding terrorists. In the fast-paced plot, two acquaintances are called to testify at her trial: aspiring movie star Lovely, a *hijra* (a third gender, a community marginalized in India) who was learning English from Jivan; and PT Sir, a teacher who taught Jivan basketball and yearns to gain favor with a right-wing populist party. All three characters seek a way to rise above their circumstances—but, Majumdar asks, at what cost?

REWRITING THE STORY of India as a nation became particularly urgent in the decade following the national emergency of Indira Gandhi's rule in the 1970s. Mostly male authors—like Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh and Vikram Seth—took it upon themselves to dismantle the idea of a single national identity and affirm India's founding ideals of secularism. Some three decades on, under a government that envisions India as a Hindu nation, Majumdar offers her novel as a reassertion of the pluralism once at the heart of Indian democracy.

While Jivan is the protagonist, Majumdar shines most in the stories of her secondary characters, who are of different religions, classes and genders. Lovely goes to auditions where she experiences praise as "a tub full of syrupy roshogolla whose sugar is flowing in my veins," while PT Sir is drawn to rallies where men wave "the saffron flags of ardent nationalism." In weaving their voices alongside interludes from marginal characters, Majumdar creates a vivid portrait of India as a polyphonic crowd, a patchwork of differences. All the characters are subject to the nationalist forces pulsing through the country, but in the face of corruption, persecution and powerlessness, they manage to hold on to their dreams and humor.

Yet the members of Majumdar's cast are also haunted by the sacrifices they make in the service of those dreams. In a broken society, instincts for self-preservation kick in and bonds are exposed as fragile. "In this world, only one of us can be truly free," thinks one character, weighing a chance to help another at a personal cost. "Every day, I am making my choice, and I am making it today also."



REVIEW

Hunting the truth

In 1999, Dorian Williams' daughter became the 13th victim of a serial killer who was never caught. Fifteen years later, a female sex worker is killed near the fish shack Dorian owns—and it takes Dorian back. The police are slow to see the connection between the murders, leading Dorian to wonder why no one seems to care about these victims.

This question propels the narrative of Ivy Pochoda's electric new novel, *These Women.* The urgency of Dorian's voice kicks off the story, which features the perspectives of several other women in a South Los Angeles neighborhood. There's a dancer from the local strip club, a cop who can't get her male colleagues to take her seriously and a mother-daughter duo with disturbing secrets of their own. Each relates to the crimes in a different way, but all suffer mistreatment by the men in their lives.

Though *These Women* is undoubtedly a thriller—filled with snappy and propulsive prose—Pochoda downplays the mystery of the killer's identity in favor of developing the women's stories. Through their voices, she dissects how we assign value to people, particularly women of color. In revealing what happens when women are discounted, she poses an uncomfortable question: Why do we fight for some and not others? *—A.G.*

DANLER: EMILY KNECHT

REVIEW

Three acts of destruction

By Annabel Gutterman

WHEN STEPHANIE DANLER PUBLISHED her debut novel in 2016, her status in the literary world skyrocketed. *Sweetbitter,* which traced the turbulent coming of age of a back waiter in New York City, received glowing reviews, was adapted for television and changed Danler's life. Selling her book meant she no longer had to wait tables and, at 31 years old, could finally afford to live alone. Danler documents the years that followed her life-altering book deal in her new memoir, *Stray.* But the book isn't a rags-to-riches story. Instead, Danler explores the ugly areas of her past, sorting through troublesome memories to make room for positive change.

In *Stray,* Danler splits her life into sections. The first and second, titled "Mother" and "Father," describe her relationships with her parents. The former is an alcoholic and, when Danler was in college, became disabled because of a brain aneurysm. The latter, with whom Danler lived in high school, struggled with an addiction to cocaine. The third and final section of the book, "Monster," recounts Danler's affair with a married man. In those pages, the author wrestles with how many of her parents' self-destructive tendencies she absorbed while growing up, and then acted on as an adult.

The memoir centers on damaging behavior—substance abuse, physical abuse and painful cycles of neglect—but is written in gripping and refreshingly plain terms. While in a fight with her mother, Danler pushes her down a flight of stairs. In the aftermath, she is disturbed by the physical manifestation of her rage. Afterward, Danler writes, "Once I had tipped the power balance, I was at sea, sinking with regret." Years later, she watches her now handicapped mother lose control while driving her car. The crash yields a devastating conclusion for the author—that someone must be responsible for her mother, and that it can't be her. The same goes for her father.

Quietly, as Danler realizes the role she needs to play in both her parents' lives, *Stray* becomes a memoir about loss. In these moments she asks what it means to lose someone who is still very much alive, and how to rebuild broken bonds. Rootless and in mourning, Danler realizes that in order to usher in the new life she has earned, she'll have to excavate the one she grieves.

'I was at sea, sinking with regret.'

STEPHANIE DANLER

Danler follows Sweetbitter *with a revealing memoir*

‹ Rae and Nanjiani: both a little mad, and made for each other

NETFLIX

REVIEW

Fit for the birds, and people too

By Stephanie Zacharek

DESPITE THEIR SEEMING LIGHTNESS, OR MAYBE because of it, screwball comedies are complicated to make. It's much easier for Hollywood to throw pots of money at an action picture than to find two actors with great chemistry who can sustain a hamster-wheeling plot for 90 minutes. Little wonder the screwball comedy is practically a lost genre.

That's why *The Lovebirds,* in all its harebrained glory, is such a delight. The plot is dumb—but then, it's just a conveyor belt for the performers' charm. Kumail Nanjiani and Issa Rae play Jibran and Leilani, a New Orleans couple who, when we first meet them, are falling deeply and convincingly in love. That part lasts for about four minutes. Next thing we know, they're four years into the relationship and their nerves are frayed. He thinks she's foolish for wanting to try out for *The Amazing Race.* Referring to the social-justice documentaries he makes for a living, she shoots back, "They're just reality shows that no one watches." The ping-ponging rhythm of their argument is so enjoyable that you don't really worry they might be on the skids—until, as they're driving to a party Jibran doesn't want to go to, the fight takes some serious wrong turns. The cutting accusations fly. Their faces, previously animated by low-grade annoyance, are now blank with pain. On the spot, they decide to break up.

'It's not a story about race, but we wanted to acknowledge our race and the fact that we're an interracial couple.'

ISSA RAE, in *Entertainment Weekly*

Then they hit a bicyclist, who has zoomed out of nowhere. He's not dead yet, but an aggressive carjacker puts an end to him, in a grimly funny, nerve-jangling way. Jibran and Leilani are afraid to go to the police, knowing how, as two people of color, they're likely to be treated. They ditch their car and run to a diner, where they sit across from each other stiffly, like crash-test dummies, not sure what to do.

The only way out is to solve the mystery themselves: Who was the bicyclist, and why would anyone want him dead?

THEIR QUEST LEADS THEM into a snare of angry white rich people and a house full of frat guys. It also involves a change of costume, to elude capture: at an all-night convenience store, he grabs a dorky souvenir T-shirt. She slips into shiny magenta pants and a furry unicorn hoodie—she's the tallest, sparkliest magical creature in all the land.

The Lovebirds, directed by Michael Showalter (who previously made *The Big Sick,* featuring Nanjiani, and co-wrote the cult favorite *Wet Hot American Summer*), has a nutty, loose-jointed spirit. The gags by themselves are modest; it's what Nanjiani and Rae do with them that counts. At the diner, Jibran calms his nerves by driving Leilani crazy with a soliloquy about the extra dollop of milkshake that always arrives, in its metal shaker, along with the regular serving. Why not just measure the amount so it all fits in the glass? He's not wrong, but you still see why Leilani wants to slug him. Rae plays Leilani with a straight shot of high-strung, high-beam radiance—you can barely imagine her *losing* a reality-show competition. These two are both a little mad, and they're made for each other; it takes this absurd mystery to make them see it. The screwball comedy is the truest and purest language of love. Like the song of lovebirds, it sounds like dizzy chatter—until you stop to really listen.

THE LOVEBIRDS *streams on Netflix beginning May 22*

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REVIEW

A final *Trip* for Brydon and Coogan

ARE ROUTINES BORING OR COMFORTING? That depends on the routine. At any other time, *The Trip to Greece,* the fourth and final installment of the *Trip* series of movies featuring Steve Coogan and Rob Brydon and directed by Michael Winterbottom (and adapted from a BBC TV series), might seem extraneous. Do we really need to see any more of Coogan and Brydon trading impersonations, wrestling with life crises and generally driving each other nuts?

But at a time when international travel is close to impossible—and laughs are in short supply too—*The Trip to Greece* is just what Hippocrates ordered. Once again playing fictional versions of themselves, Coogan and Brydon pack their bags and head off for a six-day jaunt in which they follow in the footsteps of Odysseus, or at least some of them. They sing Gregorian chants as they drift through the Caves of Diros; they make mildly off-color wisecracks as they gaze out at the island of Lesbos; and they eat at numerous enticing-looking island restaurants, generally with the azure sea twinkling behind them. As always, Winterbottom punctuates their antics with behind-the-scenes kitchen shots: pinky-white shrimp sizzle in a hot pan; a fancy something-or-other is set dramatically aflame before being plated. If you've seen any of the other films, beginning with the series's 2010 debut, *The Trip,* you know the routine.

Yet they manage to keep their ongoing battle of the barbs from going stale. As they drive through winding, idyllic roads, Coogan melodramatically accuses his friend of being a philistine who has remained blissfully ignorant of classical Greek literature, even as Brydon taunts him with a spirited rendition of the Bee Gees' theme from *Grease.* Over lunch the duo re-enact, with vigor, the dental-torture scene from *Marathon Man.* (Brydon does a mean dental-drill impersonation.) It's all so silly. But it's also kind of great, like a single glass of sparkling wine after a really bad day. And the light dancing off the brilliant blue sea isn't so bad, either. —S.Z.

> *'Quit while you're not far behind. Jump before you're pushed.'*
>
> **ROB BRYDON,** in the *Independent,* on ending the *Trip* series

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THE TRIP TO GREECE *is available on streaming platforms starting May 22*

Coogan and Brydon, taking their vacation panamas for one last spin

Dixon: speaking out at last

REVIEW

What #MeToo means for women of color

The #MeToo movement radically changed the landscape for women in the workplace. But even though the movement was founded by a black activist, Tarana Burke, it's still harder for women of color to report sex crimes. *On the Record,* directed by Kirby Dick and Amy Ziering, explores some of the reasons, even as it seeks to open that door wider by telling the stories of several women—including music executive Drew Dixon—who came forward in 2017 with allegations of sexual assault and misconduct against music mogul Russell Simmons, co-founder of Def Jam Recordings.

Dixon, who worked for Simmons at Def Jam in the mid-1990s, charges that he raped her in 1995. She left the company shortly thereafter, and felt empowered to come forward only after the Harvey Weinstein scandal broke. (Simmons denies all charges.) Dixon tells her story here with piercing candor, and activists and academics—among them Burke and Kimberlé Crenshaw—offer some reasons why women of color often refrain from reporting sex crimes: they may think they won't be believed, or may distrust the criminal-justice system. No woman who is sexually assaulted should fear coming forward. But as *On the Record* shows, breaking down those fears is part of a larger, ongoing battle. —*S.Z.*

ON THE RECORD *streams on HBO Max beginning May 27*

THE TRIP TO GREECE: IFC FILMS; ON THE RECORD: HBO MAX

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7 Questions

N.K. Jemisin The decorated sci-fi and fantasy author on what makes a city great, the need for diverse communities and the downside of Starbucks

The tone of your new book, *The City We Became,* is more lighthearted than much of your previous work, but the novel still addresses serious issues, including the perils of gentrification. Why did you want to tell this story? I've always thought of my writing as therapy. I do have a therapist, but there was a time I couldn't afford one, and writing was the way I vented anger and stress and fear and longing and all of the things that I did not have a real-world outlet for. A lot of times I don't really understand what it is that I'm trying to cope with until after I've finished the book.

During one of the novel's action sequences, Starbucks stores come to life, free themselves from their foundations and attack the protagonists. Why Starbucks? There is an inherent homogenization that Starbucks represents. It is a perfect emblem of loss and change and slow destruction of the unique culture of the city.

The book is a tribute to communities that thrive because they are multicultural. Was there something about the era we're living in that spurred you to focus on that strength now? I am speaking to the political changes that I've seen in the past few years. We're a culture that—at least aspirationally speaking—always prided itself on being a melting pot or a salad bowl, whatever you want to call it. And then suddenly we're seeing all of that being maligned. It's not who we've always said we've wanted to be. We're losing that aspirational spirit that made us what we were.

> *'WE'RE A CULTURE THAT—AT LEAST ASPIRATIONALLY SPEAKING—ALWAYS PRIDED ITSELF ON BEING A MELTING POT OR A SALAD BOWL'*

MATT WINKELMEYER—GETTY IMAGES

What makes someone a good New Yorker? Everyone that's giving back to the city, everyone that is—even in whatever small way—adding to what makes New York what it is, they are in their own way helping to strengthen the city.

Systemic oppression is a recurring theme in your work. Is it difficult to revisit those story lines and that pain over and over again? It's not difficult—this is my life. This is the world that I know. When I contemplate existential evil, I don't see some abstract devil, I see people torpedoing themselves just to maintain a status quo and systemic advantages that actually in the long run aren't helpful for everybody. White people don't really benefit that much from racism. And the majority of men aren't benefiting wildly from patriarchy. These are systems that encourage people to act outside their own best interests.

You once said that artists and creators, especially those who work in speculative fiction, are the engineers of possibility. What possibilities do you hope to engineer with your work? I would want people to come away from my fiction with a greater understanding of how these existential threats are developing and being artificially encouraged. The consistent theme throughout my work is that these are all societies that could be great, and they aren't because people gotta be a--holes. That's really what it breaks down to. There are self-sustaining systems at work which discourage people from working together and doing what is good for all. We can stop those, but it has to be a choice.

What insight can science fiction offer in today's world? Tools get used in the way that people choose to use them. What will save us is our making a choice to use those tools for good. That requires us to respect each other and understand that everyone needs to benefit from [technology], not just some. —CATE MATTHEWS

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